

Buchanan, Iraq, January 14, 1939.

No. 1221

Subject: Policy of New Government in Iraq.

Confidential

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to my dispatch no. 1203 of December 29, 1938, reporting the formation of a new Government in Iraq under General Nuri as-Said wherein I mentioned my conversation with General Nuri from which I gained the impression that in his groping for some means of stabilizing the Government, he might find it necessary to impose some form of modified dictatorship, in spite of the fact that he is a staunch supporter of and believer in democracy.

Subsequently,

Subsequently, on January 6, 1931, General Nuri
1/ broadcast a speech, a translation of which is en-
closed, which might be interpreted as a preparation
for the announcement shortly of the new Government's
policy. In this speech, General Nuri reviewed the
difficulties experienced by the Iraqis in their govern-
ment of the country, due primarily to the dual adminis-
tration with the British which existed from 1920 until
Iraq entered the League of Nations in 1932, and due
also to the inherent defects of the constitution, the
administrative law, and the inspectorate regulations,
which in the course of time made themselves apparent.
He pointed out that the new Government of Iraq was
formed on the basis of a royal, constitutional and
democratic regime. The first two characteristics were
known to the people of Iraq, but the word "democratic"
was not only a new word in the Arabic language, but
its meaning also and conception were strange to them.
General Nuri explained that the past eighteen years'
experience has demonstrated that certain changes will
have to be made in the basic laws of the country, in
order to effect stability and effective and construc-
tive administration. He also stressed that political
parties founded on specific principles instead of
personalities should be established and that an ef-
fective Government opposition in parliament should be
encouraged and permitted to cooperate with the Gover-
nment. He advocated a cultured and free press and
"a truly representative parliament which will have
control over the Government and to keep that parliament

safe

safe and a correct and regular during the execution of its constitutional duties".

In a conversation which I had with the Prime Minister on January 11th, when I congratulated him on his address, he enlarged upon it. He said that the entire Government service was "rotten", and that it would have to be completely reorganized and developed in accordance with sound principles which would provide for stability. He said, for instance, that in the past with the rapid changes of government all officials in key positions were automatically changed. This, he said, was derorulizing; that although many of the men holding office were not efficient, still even the efficient ones in such circumstances lost interest and lost heart, and in time, lost their efficiency. It is his desire to create a permanent civil service which would not be affected by changes of Government, that only cabinet ministers should change. In further discussing the matter, he said "we do not know whether we are a dictatorship or a democracy".

General Nuri left Baghdad on the morning of the 14th of this month to attend the Palestine Conference in London. He plans to return to Baghdad at the end of the month, leaving the former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Towfiq as-Suwaidi, as head of the Iraqi delegation at the Conference. I assume that shortly after General Nuri's return, he and his colleagues will formulate and announce the Government's new policy.

From my two conversations with him, and his broadcast address, I am convinced that he is honestly endeavoring to bring about constitutional and administrative

administrative and, with the view to stabilizing the Government & establishing its administration on sound, democratic principles. Under the existing laws, it is now or will be possible to bring about a change of Government without the occurrence of some form of coup d'état. It is Nuri's desire that whenever the group in power is becoming too high-handed in their exercise of authority or are otherwise conducting the affairs of the Government to their own advantage and not to that of the state, they may be given power perhaps by law with the advice of a privy council to dissolve the Government.

Aside from a few individual cases, he is following a magnanimous policy of appeasement with all other political leaders and their followers, and he has re-established the freedom of the press.

In spite of all this, it still may be possible that Nuri might find it necessary to administer the Government, for a time, under a modified form of dictatorship, in order to enforce the reforms necessary to establish democracy.

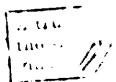
Respectfully yours,

H. Knabenshue

Enclosure:

Translation of Prime Minister's
Speech of January 6, 1939.

File no. 800
PK/wjp.



Source: *Az-Zaman*, January 6, 1939.

Speech Broadcast by His Excellency
Sayid Nuri as-Said, Prime Minister
of Iraq, on the "Problems of Iraq
and How They Should be Solved"

Gentlemen:

What are the problems of Iraq? How did they develop? Are we in need of a minute analysis of the present political situation? Yes, for if we do not analyse this regime with frankness, courage and resolution and look for its defects, we will not be able to find the effective remedies for our problems.

We now begin with the first regime of Iraq, during the formation of the provisional government toward the end of 1920, the arrival of the late King Faisal, and his proclamation by the people of Iraq as their King. As far as I can remember that proclamation was based on the establishment of a royal, constitutional and democratic government. The word "democratic", as I recollect, was the talk of private and public circles, because it was a new word and not Arabic. Some of the people were of the opinion that it need not be used while others found different interpretations for it. A section of the Iraqi people was satisfied with the establishment of a royal and constitutional government whereas the rest committed the monarchy to this provision, as we remember, and the proclamation was made in accordance with that form.

During that regime we were all endeavoring to take over gradually the responsibilities from the British authorities. Our aims were directed toward the assumption of complete responsibilities and the obtainment of our independence.

Since then Iraq has been progressing in accordance with that spirit and those principles. In each one of our stages, we endeavored to lay down sound principles and good laws for the country but the participation of the British authorities in the administration prevented the fulfilment of those laws, regulations, and principles. The more important among these, you may remember, were the Iraqi constitution, the administrative law, the Inspectorate Regulations, et cetera. These were all imbued with a spirit based on the principle of a dual system government. The constitution was established in 1922 and its provisions were drafted outside Iraq and submitted to the Ministry of Justice. I remember that His Excellency Sayid Naji as-Suwaidi was then Minister of Justice. He diagnosed the constitution and was able to improve certain of its principles. The Council of Ministers later made more slight improvements. Nevertheless, the constitution remained ambiguous, vague and defective. Along the path of progress

in its new life, Iraq has detected the weak points, the vagueness and the ambiguity in that constitution. Likewise, the electoral law is antiquated because it was issued, I remember, about 30 years ago at the time of Hadhat Pasha, while electoral laws should be revised from time to time, perhaps every ten years, in order that the country may be truly represented.

Similarly, the administrative law was drafted on the same principles of dual participation in the responsibilities of rule and so the Iraq Government continued to progress along that line until it joined the League of Nations.

I remember that some of the Iraqis used to define that state as "exceptional" because, in fact, we find "exceptions" and problems in every stage of our life. When Iraq desired to have a royal, constitutional and democratic government, it desired, undoubtedly, fully to realize those principles, but the state of affairs then prevailing did not permit it to do so. It was hoped that upon our entry into the League of Nations we would immediately and without loss of time start to remedy the defects in order that we might put into existence a royal, constitutional and democratic government.

The meaning of the first two words, royal and constitutional, is understood. But the difficulty is in the understanding of the last one - democracy. What then is democracy?

A democratic government, gentlemen, can be understood when we know of the existence of two governments or two kinds of regimes in old and modern times. The first is called dictatorial and the second democratic. Dictatorial governments are also divided into different forms one of which is individual, headed by one person, which ends with the disappearance of that person. Another form of dictatorship is based on the principles of a small group desiring to realize those principles within the atmosphere and environment of its own country. It follows those principles in an abnormal way until at last it returns to its natural state, which is democracy.

Democracy has characteristics different from those of dictatorship. The first characteristic of democracy is the existence of a representative parliament founded on parties with specific principles endeavoring to obtain a majority. But, if the parties are not founded on specific principles they would be defective and the government consequently would not be democratic, because dictatorship does not allow the existence of any party other than the one on which the dictatorship is founded. One of the characteristics of democracy is the existence of a free, cultured press which propagates and defends the principles of the parties. And one of the characteristics of democracy also is the existence of opposition in parliament, whether honest or not, I cannot say. This opposition might deviate and fabricate non-existing ideas but it is one of the supporters of democracy. The men in power must forbear it

and,

and, if the opposition is based on incorrect principles, it will first hurt itself and not the Government.

These defects, I remember, or believe, have done harm to us and led us to the events of which we now complain. We can not blame any specific person or group. But the blame, if it should be attributed to any one thing is due to our inexperience in this field. Therefore we must unite and co-operate in order that we may improve the defects of our political life. If we really aim, as we once did, to establish a royal, constitutional and democratic government, we may endeavor sincerely to reach that aim, and unite to make a pact which may be summarized in three points:

1. The necessity of establishing constructive and not destructive parties, with sound principles, compatible with the high aims of the country. These parties are vital for the desired democratic life.

2. The acceptance of opposition and its co-operation with the Government in the public policy.

3. The encouragement of a cultured and free press so that it may not have recourse to praise or abuse; the strengthening of parliamentary life by improving the constitution and the electoral law in order to acquire a truly representative parliament which will have control over the government; and to keep that parliament safe and secure from prorogation during the execution of its constitutional duties.

I am unable now to present to you the program of the Cabinet which I have had the honor to be entrusted with. However, upon the arrival of the Minister of Interior and upon deliberation with my colleagues I will submit my program which will include this spirit and these principles and deal with the treatment of problems and defects as much as possible. If the program meets the approval of His Majesty and that of the Iraqi people, we will, by the help of God, put it into execution.

I desire to conclude my talk by reading the Fatiha for the souls of all the country's martyrs, whether statesmen, soldiers or civil officials. The occurrence of sacrifices was inevitable. The nations which do not benefit from mistakes and do not prepare themselves for the future will not be able to make any good progress in life. I pray that Iraq shall, by the will of God, progress under the aegis of His Majesty the King towards its high aims which are based on sound principles.

TELEGRAM SENT

To: Secstate, Washington

Date: February 24, 10 a.m., 1939.

No.: 1

Code: Gray

Charged to: Office

600 1 1112

Parliament was dissolved yesterday after debates indicated it would not cooperate with new Nuri Government. Political situation unsettled. Despatch follows.

Knabenshue

Draft: JCS
Encode: WJP

28/608

Baghdad, Iraq, February 27, 1939.

No. 1245

Subject: Dissolution of Parliament: Review of
the Political Situation.

Confidential

Air Mail

AB

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

Confirming my telegram no. 1 of February 24, 10 a.m., I have the honor to report that Parliament was dissolved by royal decree on February 23 last. The dissolution came as almost a complete surprise, as it had been the apparent plan of the Nuri Government to continue with the old Parliament until the Budget and a number of other laws could be passed in the hope that the old Parliament would cooperate in this respect and would likewise approve a number of constitutional amendments desired by the Government before its dissolution. It has been customary for a new Government to dissolve Parliament forthwith, but by the above plan it was apparently felt that the constitutional amendments desired could thus more easily be obtained, for all such amendments must be approved by a two-thirds majority of both the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies and the Chamber must then be dissolved. A new Chamber must then be elected and the amendments approved by the previous Parliament must again be approved by a two-thirds majority of

each

each Chapter before promulgation by the King.

It appears from the local press that the immediate cause of the di solution was a debate held in Parliament on February 23rd which put the Government in a very difficult position. A Deputy from Kut, Sayid Daud as-Saadi, had demanded the trial of members of the former Cabinet for alleged abuse in connection with the malicious propaganda law. The Deputy in question had a deep personal grievance, as he was one of those who had been deported to the provinces by the Midfai Cabinet just before its fall in the belief that he was responsible for some of the bombing outrages which had been perpetrated shortly before. The Nuri Cabinet took a neutral attitude toward Deputy Saadi's proposal, but the debate got out of hand and some of those taking part warmly defended and praised the record and achievements of the previous Cabinet. When the vote was taken, Sayid Saadi cast the only vote in favor of his proposal. The Arabic press suggests that as a result the present Cabinet came to the conclusion that it could not rely on the cooperation of the Chamber in approving the budget and the constitutional amendments mentioned above, and therefore proceeded to its immediate dissolution. That this was the primary reason seems to be borne out by the text of the decree itself which in translation reads as follows:

"Whereas Constitutional procedure requires complete harmony between the Executive and the Legislative, and existing circumstances in the country call for important reforms making the existence of such harmony of the greatest importance to the Cabinet, and as the Cabinet feels that no such harmony exists at present between itself and the present Majlis, it has been decided, in accordance with Article 26 of the Constitution and in pursuance of the decision of the Council of Ministers, to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies and to hold new elections."

The Department will recall that Parliament had been prorogued for one month on December 1st last by the Midfai Cabinet and that upon the accession to power of the present Nuri Cabinet it was prorogued one month more, the maximum allowed by law, until February 1st. However, only three meetings of the Chamber and one of the Senate had been held previous to its dissolution on February 23rd. The new Parliament must assemble in special session not more than four months after the date of dissolution, that is, not later than June 23 next.

It is apparent with the dissolution of Parliament that the new Government has encountered serious trouble and may have difficulty in maintaining itself in power. The Department will recall that General Nuri as-Said and his new Cabinet came into office on December 25th last; that Sayid Naji Shawkat, who for

the last five years had been Iraqi Minister in Ankara, was appointed Minister of Interior and arrived in Baghdad to assume his duties on January 10. (entering Iraq incidentally, on the first Taurus Express to cross the frontier, as the new railway extension is now completed almost all the way to Mosul); and that General Nuri left Baghdad on January 14 to participate in the conferences which took place in Cairo and are now continuing in London on the Palestine situation. Since his departure, Neji Shawkat has been Acting Prime Minister, and Rustum Haidar Acting Foreign Minister. It is reported that the Acting Prime Minister was at first very conciliatory in all his actions, but that more recently, imbued with the methods which he has seen employed in Turkey during the last five years, he has run rather rough-shod over any opposition. He has instituted the system of weekly press conferences, and in his first one was reported by the local press as stating that Iraq's progress had not been all that could be desired. He said that there are nations, some near and some far, whose status twenty years ago was similar to that of Iraq, which have since far outstripped this country, the reason being that these nations "marched in a specific direction" whereas Iraq has stumbled and faltered in its course. This, however, the Acting Prime Minister added, should not prevent Iraq from marching straight down the path of progress in the future.

Due to reductions in revenue because of decreased exports and imports and a general slackening in business, and due also to a great increase in expenditure because of the capital works program, especially the completion of the Baiji-Tel Kotchek extension of the railway, the new Government finds itself in a rather difficult financial situation. In order to cope with this, it announced its intention of reducing by 10% the salaries of all officials and employees receiving more than 18 dinars (about \$90) per month. As this meant the reduction of the salary of every army officer and the army was responsible for bringing the new Government into power, considerable dissatisfaction was at once felt and it is reported that a number of important army officers expressed their displeasure to General Taha al-Hashimi, the Minister of Defense. Additional difficulties for the new Government were brought about by an unexpected outbreak between one branch of the important Shammar tribe in the north and the Obaid tribe. A tribal feud, which had been allowed to lapse for almost twenty years, was suddenly renewed by the assassination of members of the ruling families of the two tribes. It is understood that the Government has taken strong measures to prevent the outbreak of fighting between the two tribes. Furthermore, the new Rais of the Royal Diwan and Private Secretary to the King, Sayid Rashid Ali al-Gailani, a former Prime Minister, is an astute politician whose intrigues against former Governments have been notorious. It is rumored that he has taken advantage of General Nuri's absence to carry on renewed

intrigues,

intrigues, presumably with the hope of assuming power himself at some appropriate time. It is even rumored that the Acting Prime Minister, Naji Shawkat, would be receptive to a change if he could become the Prime Minister himself, a position he has held before. The local press and the private radio station of the King have, as is being reported in a separate despatch, been carrying on an extensive campaign against the Shaikh of Kuwait in favor of the inclusion of the Sheikdom of Kuwait in Iraq. This of course has possibilities of causing difficulties with the British Government. All these problems have put the Cabinet in a rather awkward position and have given rise to the feeling that the Government itself might fall unless General Nuri hurried back to Baghdad. This he seemed reluctant to do because of the importance to the Arab world of the Palestine negotiations being carried on in London. We understand this morning, however, that he left London the day before yesterday and is expected to arrive here tomorrow, although it is known that he telegraphed his wife only a few days ago that he would not return before the middle of March.

It is interesting in this connection to report a conversation I had several days ago with the British Ambassador, Sir Maurice Peterson. Mentioning the intrigues allegedly being carried on by Naji Shawkat and Rashid Ali, he remarked that Nuri had better return to Baghdad soon or he might find no Government to return to. This morning I saw him again when we were being presented to the Iranian Crown Prince and, referring to our previous conversation, commented on the fact that Nuri would be in Baghdad again tomorrow. He smiled and expressed his pleasure at this, indicating that Naji Shawkat had been difficult to deal with. I gained the distinct impression that Nuri was returning earlier than intended at his, the Ambassador's, suggestion. The British of course prefer to deal with Nuri who has real ability and is willing to cooperate with them.

While the press was taken by surprise at the dissolution of Parliament, it has published surprisingly little concerning it, largely, it is believed, because of the visit to Baghdad of the Iranian Crown Prince on his way to Cairo to marry an Egyptian princess. One important newspaper, however, "Al-Istiqlal", which had been suppressed by the Midfa'i Cabinet, has come out editorially in support of the Government's action in dissolving Parliament, while taking advantage of the opportunity to attack the former Cabinet and Chamber of Deputies for failing, as it claims, to act in the best interests of the country. The following paragraph in this editorial is of special interest as being a public admission that the local press is being subsidized by unnamed foreign governments:

"The former Cabinet suppressed many newspapers, because these newspapers attempted to serve the country and speak the truth and were sincere in their frankness. Instead it gave scope to a false and destructive press which received subsidies from

foreign governments with its cognizance."

With the return of General Nuri, it is expected that plans for the election of the new Parliament will be completed at once and that the statement of policy of the new Cabinet, which has been long delayed due to his absence, will at last be published. Furthermore, the press today reports that, with the dissolution of Parliament, any plan for the reduction of salaries has of necessity been postponed, if not abandoned. If the continued support of the army is thereby assured, it would seem that General Nuri should be able to carry on with his present Government for the time being at least. The situation has, however, become so unsettled that it will be impossible to predict for some time whether he will be able to establish himself firmly in power and carry out the rather indefinite reforms suggested in his radio address to the nation, the text of which was discussed and transmitted in my despatch no. 1221 of January 16, 1939.

Respectfully yours,

P. Knabenshue

File no. 800/803
JCS/wjp.

TELEGRAM SENT

To: Secstate, Washington

Date: March 7, 1 p.m., 1939.

No.: 5

Code: Gray

Charged to: Office

ERO 1-1142

My 1, February 24, 10 a.m. A plot of a few army officers and possibly civilians to overthrow the King and the Government has been discovered and apparently checked by the arrest of the conspirators. The Government is in control and no disturbances have been reported.

Knabenshue

PK
Draft: JCS
Encode: WJP

fm

Copy in W.Murray file.

Baghdad, Iraq, March 9, 1939.

Dear Wallace:

Under date of November 21, 1938, Paul Alling, then Acting Chief of the Division, wrote me requesting a report regarding German political and economic activity in Iraq. At the time of the receipt of that letter, I had obtained no information of much value or interest in addition to that reported in my despatch no. 1019 of April 28, 1938. Yesterday, however, I had the opportunity of discussing this subject with the British Ambassador, Sir Maurice Peterson, and I am now reporting the results of this conversation together with some additional comment in my despatch no. 1252 of this date.

Sincerely yours,

P. Knobenbach

Wallace Murray, Esquire,
Chief, Division of Near Eastern Affairs,
Department of State,
Washington, D. C.

File no. 800
JCS/wjp.

Baghdad, Iraq, March 9, 1939.

No. 1252

Subject: German Economic and Political Activity in Iraq.

Confidential

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

In my despatch no. 1019 of April 28, 1938, I had the honor to submit a few observations on German political and economic activity in the Near East, especially Iraq and the Persian Gulf. Yesterday I had the opportunity of discussing this subject with the British Ambassador, Sir Maurice Peterson (recently appointed Ambassador to Spain), and his comments will no doubt be of interest to the Department.

I asked the Ambassador whether he had noted much evidence of German penetration, economic and political, in Iraq. He said that as far as he knew there was not

much

much abnormal economic penetration, but that they were still making efforts to sell armaments to the Iraqi Government, which action of course had a political flavor. He mentioned Hans Steffan (formerly honorary consul general of Germany in Addis Ababa) who seems to be here representing German armament interests and who is constantly making efforts to contact Iraqi army officers with a view to the sale of German armaments. I mentioned that his predecessor, Sir Archibald Clark-Kerr, had told me that the Iraqi Government complained that the British Government would not supply what they require and that therefore they had to purchase elsewhere. He said that the same complaints were made to him and that the Iraqis claimed that in accordance with their treaty of alliance the British were obliged to furnish Iraq with arms. He said that he informed them that this was not the case, that the Treaty merely bound Iraq to purchase their arms from England, but that the difficulty was their inability to pay for them.

The Ambassador also stated that the Germans are still making an effort to get the contract for the supply of 100 busses for the proposed new bus service of Baghdad and that they had just recently come down in their price again, but he seemed confident that the Germans would not get the order. He said that Dr. Grobba, the German Minister, had also made an effort to sell equipment to the Baghdad Technical School, but that again he did not seem to think they would get the order. In that connection, he said that he, the Ambassador, had persuaded the Iraq Petroleum Company to make a contribution of equipment to that school. Copies

-1-

Copies of the terms of the tender for the 100 busses mentioned by the Ambassador were transmitted to the Department several months ago. No decision has yet been reached. However, the British and German Governments have apparently subsidized the respective British and German companies making the best bids and the Iraqi Government will thus be able to drive a sharp bargain. In all probability, however, a British company manufacturing diesel-powered busses will get the order. The local agents for American busses also submitted bids, but have not attempted to meet the prices now being offered by the British and German companies, as this business is no longer attractive from a commercial standpoint. The gift of machinery and equipment to the Baghdad Technical School by the Iraq Petroleum Company referred to by the Ambassador was reported as an item in my current events despatch no. 1248 of March 3, 1939.

Since the submission of my despatch no. 1019 of April 28, 1938, further statistics have become available as to the trade between Iraq and Germany. As reported in that despatch, the total value of imports into Iraq from Germany in 1935 was about Iraq Dinars 355,000 and in 1936, I.D. 465,000. In the former year Germany occupied sixth place, furnishing 5.24% of all Iraqi imports. In 1936, Germany occupied fourth place with 6.46% of the total imports. In 1937, it can now be reported, Germany furnished Iraq with goods to the value of I.D. 630,000, but was in fifth place with 6.6% of the imports.

As to Iraqi exports to Germany, the latter

country

country occupies a very low position in the list, the total values in the years 1935, 1936 and 1937 being respectively I.D. 55,000, I.D. 25,000 and I.D. 185,000, which constituted respectively 1.03%, 2.75% and 3.37% of Iraq's total exports. Germany's position in the list was respectively tenth, eleventh and ninth.

Statistics for the year 1938 are not yet available, but it is estimated that the imports into Iraq during that year were about the same, but that exports fell off about 40%. Germany is believed to have gained slightly in imports, which consist principally of cast-iron and steel products, mostly in the form of machinery. Germany has also sold a certain amount of oil equipment to the Iraq Petroleum Company. At the present time a group of German workmen are constructing oil tanks in the Kirkuk field of this company and it is understood that they will later construct tanks at both Tripoli and Haifa. It is also understood that the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company has purchased a certain amount of German equipment for its refinery at Abadan, Iran, and that the Standard Oil Company of California has purchased some refinery and pipe-line equipment of German manufacture for the use of its subsidiary Bahrain Petroleum Company in the Persian Gulf.

Dr. Grobba, the German Minister, continues to be very active on behalf of German commercial interests. Due to political developments in Europe, however, his position in this country in which the British are dominant has of course suffered. He has been absent in Jeddah part of the winter, but otherwise has not been as active socially as in previous years. On the other hand, the new commercial secretary of the British

Embassy, Mr. John Walker, who came here from Buenos Aires, has been very active and is reported to be competing with Dr. Grobba on even terms so far as zeal for British commercial interests is concerned.

I have not obtained any very definite information concerning Dr. Grobba's trip to Jeddah, where he presented his credentials as Germany's first Minister to Saudi Arabia. The details of his departure and return were reported in my current events despatch no. 1246 of March 3, 1939 and previous despatches. He has, however, stated since his return that he definitely was not seeking either oil or oil concessions in Saudi Arabia. He told me that upon his arrival at Jeddah he found there the representatives of both American and British oil companies, who were very cool to him at first. However, as soon as they learned that he was really not negotiating for an oil concession in western Arabia, they became very friendly to him. There are rumors, however, that Dr. Grobba did conclude with King Ibn Saud a trade or barter agreement of some kind.

It may also be of interest to add that from time to time Dr. Grobba circulates among Iraqis pamphlets with regard to Germany--the most recent of which was a copy in English of Herr Hitler's speech to the Reichstag of January 30, 1939.

In summary, it seems clear that, while the Germans are very active in Iraq, their trade with this country is relatively small and they are not making any great progress in the way of further economic penetration. It also appears that, since the crisis of September, 1938, the British are more active in combatting

German

German attempts to better their commercial position in this country.

Respectfully yours,

P. Knabenshue

File no. 800
PK/JCS/wjp.

TELEGRAM SENT

to: Secstate, Washington

Date: March 20, 10 a.m., 1939.

No.: 8

code: Gray

Charged to: Office

660 1-1142

My 5, March 7, 2 p.m. After trial by mixed military and civilian court five conspirators including Hikmet Suleiman, former Premier, were condemned to death and two to penal servitude. All death sentences except one have been commuted to various terms of imprisonment, Hikmet receiving five years.

Knabenshue

Draft: JCS
Encode: WJP

Perth, March 30, 1939.

No. 1267

Subject: Nuri Government's Program of Policy.

225

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

Referring to my despatch no. 1221 of January 16, 1939, discussing the policy of the Government of General Nuri as-Said which took office on December 25 last, to my despatch no. 1245 of February 27 reporting the dissolution of Parliament, and to my despatch no. 1264 of March 25 informing the Department of a plot to overthrow the King and the Government and the trial of the conspirators, I have the honor to enclose a summarized translation of the "Program of

Policy"

"policy" of the new Government as outlined in the "Iraq Times" of March 28. The delay in formulating and making public a statement of this nature, for it has been the custom for each new Cabinet to issue such a statement, was of course due first to the departure of General Nuri early in January for London to take part in the Palestine conversations which were held there, then to the dissolution of Parliament and the resulting political crisis which made it necessary for him to return to Baghdad, and finally to the plot to overthrow the Government referred to above.

The program of policy of the present Government is, as is usual, made up mostly of generalities to which all Cabinets could subscribe. It does, however, state that general parliamentary elections have been proclaimed to enable the nation to give its verdict on the Government. The first steps for the election of primary electors were in fact carried out in Baghdad yesterday.

The program also declares that steps are being taken to amend the constitution. This indicates that recent events have not caused the Cabinet to give up its plans in this respect as reported in the above-mentioned despatches. The statement asserts further that the Cabinet will combat harmful propaganda, and, pointing out that past events have encouraged some army officers to dabble in politics, announces that it will not hesitate to put an end to any action not consistent with the public interest.

On the subject of foreign policy, the Cabinet announced

announced that it will not ever to expand the scope of the Arab alliance by strengthening the present political, economic and cultural relations and by working for the independence of neighboring Arab states in accordance with the wishes of their inhabitants; that it will foster friendly relations with Great Britain on the basis of the alliance and mutual interests of the two nations; that it will strengthen the friendship and cooperation among the powers of the Sa'adabad Pact; and that it will follow a policy of friendship and reciprocity with all other States.

Respectfully yours,

J. Knabenshue

Enclosure: Summarized "Program of Policy".

File no. 800
JCV/wjp.

Enclosure to despatch no. 1167 of March 2, 1939, from
the American Legation at Baghdad, Iraq.

Source: The Daily Times, March 23, 1939.

CABINET'S PROGRAMME

Amendment of the Constitution

FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS

Measures to Suppress Harmful Propaganda

The new Cabinet's programme of policy was issued to-day.

The statement opens by saying that when the new Government was formed it relied upon the confidence of his Majesty the King and the co-operation of the nation and was fully aware of the responsibilities entrusted to it, taking into consideration the lessons of past unhappy events, which had adversely affected the country's peace and tranquillity.

The Cabinet, when making this announcement of its policy, adds that it has already proclaimed a general election to enable the nation to give its verdict. In the meantime steps are being taken to amend the Constitution in a manner consistent with the present needs of the country.

One of the chief aims of the Cabinet is to stabilise the country's peace and order to enable the nation to advance in the path of progress.

The Cabinet will not hesitate to combat any harmful propaganda or ideas which tend to disturb the country's unity. The Cabinet feels that past events have encouraged some officials to dabble in politics, forgetting their own duties and responsibilities. The Cabinet, therefore, expects that everyone should do his duty, and in the meantime it would not hesitate to put an end to any action which was not consistent with the public interest.

The Cabinet's other objects are summarised as follows:—

Internal Politics

To organise the country's national life and try to raise the nation's standard in conformity with modern needs.

To ensure peace and tranquillity and to strengthen the spirit of responsibility and respect for laws.

To raise the standard of State officials and increase the authority of local administrative authorities, especially in the spheres of education and health.

To settle nomadic tribes by finding suitable lands for them.

To encourage marriages in order to secure a higher birth rate.

To improve labour conditions and take a greater interest in securing a higher standard of health, to combat various kinds of diseases, and raise the standard of living in the villages.

To reorganise the forces entrusted with maintaining internal security on the basis of a police force and gendarmerie.

National Defence

To strengthen the country's army and increase its equipment, and to take into consideration military needs when developing the country's natural resources, its industry and means of communication.

To extend military training to all schools and to foster the military spirit in the youth of the nation.

Finance and Economics

To ensure a balanced budget, to stabilise the State cadre, and to reorganise the government departments in accordance with the needs of the country.

To reconsider the Civil Service laws and regulations so as to safeguard public interests and the rights of officials.

To improve the form of taxation, to expand the scope of capital works and to put in hand the important irrigation schemes required, particularly in the Middle Euphrates area.

To improve road conditions and construct the State buildings required.

To organise export and import trade and to ensure equilibrium by applying the principle of reciprocity; to organise trade and industry and increase exports, more especially in the country's chief products, such as dates, grain and tobacco; to organise the national industries, to establish local banks, and to encourage saving among the public.

Justice

To ensure justice and the true application of laws, to enact new laws required by the country, and to raise the standard of judicial institutions.

Education

To combat illiteracy and make elementary education universal, and to revive the idea of establishing a university.

To give more attention to technical and agricultural education, to extend female education, and to foster the sporting spirit in the nation's youth.

Foreign Policy

To try to expand the scope of the Arab alliance by strengthening the present political, economic and cultural relations, and to work for the independence of neighbouring Arab countries in accordance with the wishes of their inhabitants.

To foster the friendly relations with Great Britain on the basis of the alliance and mutual interests.

To strengthen friendship and co-operation among the Powers of the Saadabad Pact, and to follow a policy of friendship and reciprocity with all other states.

Baghdad, April 11, 1939.

No. 1274

Subject: Nuri Government's Program of Policy

MS

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

Supplementing my despatch no. 1267 of March 30, 1939, with which was enclosed a summarized translation of the "Program of Policy" of the Nuri Cabinet, I have the honor to enclose a summarized translation, as published in the "Iraq Times", of an address broadcast by radio on the evening of March 30 last by General Nuri as-Said, the Prime Minister, in which he discussed the policy of his Cabinet in the light of this program.

The Prime Minister stated that it is necessary
for

for the country to revert to normal conditions and that this can only be done by increasing the authority of the Constitution. To ensure that this will be carried out, he added, "it is of the utmost importance that the personnel of the defense forces should not be allowed to contemplate any renewal of the unhappy events of the past". He here referred to the retirement or dismissal from the Army of a number of army officers following the recent plot against the Throne and to the authority which the Government thereafter obtained to dispense with the services of those army and civil officials who had proved unfaithful and incompetent.

Referring to the financial situation of the country, General Nuri pointed out that whereas the Treasury had a reserve of Iraqi Dinars 700,000 in 1936, the Government is today indebted to the extent of about one million dinars and that not only is there no reserve but an actual deficit of about I.D. 800,000 in addition to a further sum of I.D. 652,000 which the Government must pay although no authority had ever been obtained for the expenditure of this amount.

Finally, with reference to the foreign policy of Iraq, the Prime Minister stated that this is based on the following two principles:

"1. The policy of alliance with neighboring independent Arab States and sincere friendship with our two neighbors, Turkey and Iran, in the spirit of the Saadabad Pact;

"2. The policy of our alliance with Great Britain."

The Prime Minister added that, with reference to Iraq's policy towards other foreign states, "it is

based on friendship and mutual interest, and it is therefore in the interest of Iraq that this country should not be made the center of any activities, whatever their origin might be, which may prejudice the two principles to which I have referred." This, it may be added, is an undoubted reference to anti-British propaganda which is allegedly being carried on in Iraq by certain European powers which are endeavoring to make difficulties for Great Britain in this part of the world.

Respectfully yours,

P. Knabenshue

Enclosure:

Summarized translation as published in the "Iraq Times" of the Prime Minister's speech.

File no. 800
JCS/wjp/jnc.

Enclosure to despatch no. 19/4 of April 11, 1939, from
the American Legation at Baghdad, Iraq.

Source: The Iraq Times, March 31, 1939.

SUMMARY OF SPEECH BROADCAST BY PRIME
MINISTER, NURI AS-SAID OUTLINING THE
POLICY OF HIS CABINET

The Prime Minister, H. E. Sayid Nuri as-Said, broadcast an important speech from the Baghdad broadcasting station at 8 p.m. last night. The Premier outlined the policy of his Cabinet in the light of the Ministerial programme which was published last Tuesday. His Excellency began by saying that when he was entrusted by his Majesty the King with the task of forming a new Government he made a statement to the public on the events that had occurred during recent years, and suggested the measures that should be taken to bring about an improvement in the situation. He went on to say that he had chosen as his Ministerial colleagues statesmen who were well known for their independence of thought. He was sure, therefore, that steps that might be contemplated by them would not arouse any difference of opinion.

"Now that the Cabinet's programme of policy has been announced," said his Excellency, "and as I believe in the necessity of personal contact with the people from time to time in order that they may be acquainted with the intentions of the Cabinet, I consider it advisable to speak to them again, giving them further enlightenment on the points raised in the programme. The nation as a whole is unanimous on the need of our reverting to normal conditions, and this can be effected only by increasing the authority of the Constitution. To ensure that this will be carried out it is of the utmost importance that the personnel of the defence forces should not be allowed to contemplate any renewal of the unhappy events of the past. It is possible that some of those who were dismissed from the Army are men of good will and men who, in the past, may have rendered valuable service to the State. It is not intended to lose the services of such men, and the State will no doubt be able to utilize them in other branches of the administration. The unfortunate events of the past seriously affected the machinery of State, causing many public complaints as to the manner in which certain officials were carrying out their duties. This led the Cabinet to obtain legal powers to enable the Government to eliminate the causes of these complaints, and to ensure that State officials will carry out their duties in the best manner possible."

Sayid Nuri as-Said then turned to the financial situation of the country, saying: "The unfortunate events of the past also seriously affected the financial position of the country. The State has been unable to carry out any important development schemes since 1936, with the exception of the projects which were provided for in that year. In 1936 the Treasury had a reserve of £.D.700,000. To-day the State is indebted to the extent of about one million dinars, and the revenues from the oil royalties,

which

which amount to about two million Dinars annually, have been plodged as security. All who are aware of the former sound financial position of Iraq will agree that such a state of affairs is very bad on the country. Not only have we no reserve at present but there is an actual deficiency of about £.L.800,000, in addition to a further sum of £.L.652,000 which we are bound to pay although no authority has ever been obtained for the expenditure of this amount. These facts make it incumbent on us to take immediate steps to rectify the financial situation. Furthermore, it is essential that a number of urgent productive schemes should be carried out without any delay in the Middle Euphrates and in other parts of the country. These schemes were mentioned in our programme of policy, and I assure you that we are now doing our best to find the funds required to carry them out without imposing additional burdens on the tax-payers."

Lastly, H.E. Sayid Nuri as-Said turned to the foreign policy of Iraq, saying: "Our foreign policy is based on the following two principles:-

1. The policy of alliance with neighboring independent Arab States and sincere friendship with our two neighbours, Turkey and Iran, in the spirit of the Sandzak Pact;
2. The policy of our alliance with Great Britain.

These two principles will be followed on parallel paths. Our relations with other Arab countries, and our feeling that they should attain their freedom and independence, do not clash with these two principles. As regards our policy towards other foreign States, it is based on friendship and mutual interest, and it is therefore in the interests of Iraq that this country should not be made the centre of any activities, whatever their origin may be, which may prejudice the two principles to which I have referred." The Premier's important speech, we understand, was heard clearly not only in Baghdad but also in all provincial centres.

Paraphrase

TELEGRAM SENT

To: Secstate, Washington

Date: April 12, 3 p.m., 1939.

No.: 16

Re: Confidential

Charged to: Office

600 1-1142

Referring to Department's telegram no. 7,
April 12, 5 p.m.

1. I was informed this morning by the Minister for Foreign Affairs that the proposed meeting of the Seababab powers at Teheran will not take place due to the impossibility of either his or the Turkish Foreign Minister's attending. The meeting would have been the normal annual one and not one specially for the purpose of taking action in connection with the present situation.

2. With reference to Iraqi reaction to present conditions in Europe, the Prime Minister said that neither the people nor Government of Iraq are in sympathy with German and Italian aggressions and strongly disapprove them. He said that they were waiting with deep interest to see what the United States, Britain and France intended to do about them and that they would welcome any action which would put a stop to these aggressions. This in my opinion represents the situation accurately, and as indicated in my 9, March 22, 1 p.m., I believe that Iraq will follow Great Britain's lead.

3. Nuri stated also in referring to the Palestine situation that he was hopeful of an agreed solution of the problem emerging from the discussions now taking place in Cairo.

Knabenshue

Draft: PK/JCS
Encode: JCS/WJP

fm

Baghdad, April 13, 1939.

Memorandum for the Viceroy.

I was received in audience at 11:15 a.m. today by the Regent, His Royal Highness Prince Abdul Illah. General Nuri, the Prime Minister and Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs was present. I expressed to the Regent the deep sympathy of the President and the Government of the Union of India at the sad death of His Majesty King Ghazi and the loss thus sustained by the people of Iraq. As I have been in friendly social relations with Prince Abdul Illah for a number of years, I added that I felt it fortunate for Iraq that he was available to carry on in the sad circumstances.

Nothing was touched upon of any serious consequence during the brief conversation which follows.

In leaving I asked General Nuri if he would spare me a few minutes to give me certain information which I desired. I told him that it had come to my attention that delegates of the Saadabad Powers were intending to meet in Teheran next week with a view to acting upon a proposal to adopt a resolution that the Pact should become also a pact for mutual defense. Nuri replied that the meeting would not be held, that it was to have been the normal annual meeting of delegates of the Saadabad Powers and not a special meeting for the purpose of taking action in connection with the present situation. He said that he had received a telegram yesterday from the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs saying it would be impossible for

him

him to go to Teheran and that as he, Nuri, was also unable to leave Baghdad the meeting could not now take place.

In reply to my question as to the reaction here to the present situation in Europe, he replied that the Iraqi people and Government were not in sympathy with the aggressions carried out by Germany and Italy and strongly disapproved of them. He said that they would welcome any action which would put a stop to such aggressions and that they were waiting with deep interest to see what England, France and the United States intended to do about it.

In reply to my question with regard to the more recent developments in the Palestine situation, he said that discussions were now taking place in Cairo and that he was hopeful of an agreed solution of the problem.

Pk

File no. 710/800/840.1
PK/wjp.

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

From: Washington via Paris

Date: April 14, 8 p.m., 1939.

No.: --

To: Gray

Received: April 16, 10 p.m., 1939.

Tonight the following identical messages are being transmitted to the Chancellor of the German Reich and to the Chief of the Italian Government by the President.

"You realize I am sure that throughout the world hundreds of millions of human beings are living today in constant fear of a new war or even a series of wars.

"The existence of this fear--and the possibility of such a conflict--is of definite concern to the people of the United States for whom I speak, as it must also be to the peoples of the other nations of the entire Western Hemisphere. All of them know that any major war, even were it to be confined to other continents, must bear heavily on them during its continuation and also for generations to come.

"Because of the fact that after the acute tension in which the world has been living during the past few weeks there would seem to be a momentary relaxation--because no troops are at this moment on the march--this may be an opportune moment for me to send you this message.

"On a previous occasion I have addressed you in behalf of the settlement of political, economic, and social problems by peaceful methods and without resort to arms.

"But the tide of events seems to have reverted to the threat of arms. If such threats continue, it seems inevitable that much of the world must become involved in common ruin. All the world, victorious nations, vanquished nations, and neutral nations will suffer. I refuse to believe that the world is, of necessity, such a prisoner of destiny. On the contrary, it is clear that the leaders of great nations have it in their power to liberate their peoples from the disaster that impends. It is equally clear that in their own minds and in their own hearts the peoples themselves desire that their fears be ended.

"It

"It is, however, unfortunately necessary to take cognizance of recent events.

"Three nations in Europe and one in Africa have seen their independent existence terminated. A vast territory in another independent nation of the Far East has been occupied by a neighboring State. Reports, which we trust are not true, insist that further acts of aggression are contemplated against still other independent nations. Plainly the world is moving toward the moment when this situation must end in catastrophe unless a more rational way of guiding events is found.

"You have repeatedly asserted that you and the Italian (German to Berlin) people have no desire for war. If this is true there need be no war.

"Nothing can persuade the peoples of the earth that any governing power has any right or need to inflict the consequences of war on its own or any other people save in the cause of self-evident home defense.

"In making this statement we as Americans speak not through selfishness or fear. If we speak now it is with the voice of strength and with friendship for mankind. It is still clear to me that international problems can be solved at the council table.

"It is therefore no answer to the plea for peaceful discussion for one side to plead that unless they receive assurances beforehand that the verdict will be theirs, they will not lay aside their arms. In conference rooms, as in courts, it is necessary that both sides enter upon the discussion in good faith, assuming that substantial justice will accrue to both; and it is customary and necessary that they leave their arms outside the room where they confer.

"I am convinced that the cause of world peace would be greatly advanced if the nations of the world were to obtain a frank statement relating to the present and future policy of governments.

"Because the United States as one of the nations of the Western Hemisphere is not involved in the immediate controversies which have arisen in Europe, I trust that you may be willing to make such a statement of policy to me as the head of a nation far removed from Europe in order that I acting only with the responsibility and obligation of a friendly intermediary may communicate such declaration to other nations now apprehensive as to the course which the policy of your government may take.

"Are you willing to give assurance that your armed

forces

forces will not attack or invade the territory or possessions of the following independent nations: Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, The Netherlands, Belgium, Great Britain and Ireland, France, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Lichtenstein, Luxembourg, Poland, Hungary, Roumania, Yugoslavia, Russia, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Iraq, the Arabias, Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Iran.

"Such an assurance clearly must apply not only to the present day but also to a future sufficiently long to give every opportunity to work by peaceful methods for a more permanent peace. I therefore suggest that you construe the word "future" to apply to a minimum period of assured non-aggression--ten years at the least--a quarter of a century, if we dare look that far ahead.

"If such assurance is given by your Government, I will immediately transmit it to the Governments of the nations I have named and I will simultaneously inquire whether, as I am reasonably sure, each of the nations enumerated above will in turn give like assurance for transmission to you.

"Reciprocal assurances such as I have outlined will bring to the world an immediate measure of relief.

"I propose that if it is given, two essential problems shall promptly be discussed in the resulting peaceful surroundings, and in those discussions the Government of the United States will gladly take part.

"The discussions which I have in mind relate to the most effective and immediate manner through which the peoples of the world can obtain progressive relief from the crushing burden of armaments which is each day bringing them more closely to the brink of economic disaster. Simultaneously the Government of the United States would be prepared to take part in discussions looking towards the most practical manner of opening up avenues of international trade to the end that every nation of the earth may be enabled to buy and sell on equal terms in the world market as well as to possess assurance of obtaining the materials and products of peaceful economic life.

"At the same time, those Governments other than the United States which are directly interested could undertake such political discussions as they may consider necessary or desirable.

"We recognize complex world problems which affect all humanity but we know that study and discussion of them must be held in an atmosphere of peace. Such an atmosphere of peace cannot exist if negotiations are overshadowed by

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the threat of force or by the fear of war.

"I think you will not misunderstand the spirit of frankness in which I send you this message. Heads of great governments in this hour are literally responsible for the fate of humanity in the coming years. They cannot fail to hear the prayers of their peoples to be protected from the foreseeable chaos of war. History will hold them accountable for the lives and the happiness of all--even unto the least.

"I hope that your answer will make it possible for humanity to lose fear and regain security for many years to come."

The text of the message will be released to the press in Washington at 10:30 a.m., April 15 Washington time. Hull.

Bullitt

Decode: JCS/WJP

Paraphrase

TELEGRAM SENT

To: Secstate, Washington

Date: April 18, 11, a.m., 1939.

No.: 19

Code: Confidential

Charged to: Office

SPD 1-1142

To be kept confidential.

It is the belief of the Iraqi Government that all German propaganda in this country and the Near East is directed by the German Minister, Dr. Grobba. This propaganda, which is believed to be indirectly responsible for the death of the British Consul at Mosul and to have been the source of current rumors attributing the death of Ghazi to foul play, includes the subsidization of newspapers and individuals and has reached serious proportions. Last night, the Prime Minister told me that as a consequence, the German Government had been informed that the Iraqi Government questioned the propriety of the German Minister's conduct. At the same time he said that, at the request of the Iraqi Government, the head Nazi in Iraq, Dr. Jordan, had left the country. He indicated that other Germans had previously departed that that they will be followed by others considered undesirable.

Knabenshue

Draft: PK
Encode: WJP

J. L.



TELEGRAM SENT

to: Secstate, Washington

Date: April 19, 3 p.m., 1939.

No.: 20

cc: Gray

Charged to: Office

SPD 1-1142

I presented to the Prime Minister the text of the President's message to Hitler and Mussolini, suggesting that he might like to make some comment for transmission to my Government. I have today received from him the following:

"The Iraqi Government has followed with increasing anxiety the course of recent events in Europe, culminating in the termination of the independence of the small Muslim State of Albania. The constant threat of war and the crushing burden of expenditure on armaments have gravely prejudiced what it conceives to be its principal duty, to work for the progress and happiness of all classes of its people.

"The policy of Iraq is to live not only in peace but on terms of the closest collaboration with all countries especially its neighbors. It therefore welcomes the magnanimous initiative of the President of the United States and is ready to cooperate without reserve for the realization of his aims."

The Prime Minister subsequently informed me verbally that the text of the above comment has been transmitted to the other members of the Saadabad Pact.

Knabenshue

Draft: PK
Encode: WJP.

TELEGRAM SENT

To: Amembassy, Ankara

Date: April 21, 10 a.m., 1939.

No.: --

Code: Gray

Charged to: Office

SPD 1-1142

Naji Shawkat, Minister of Interior and former
Minister to Turkey, leaving today for Ankara for
discussions with the Turkish Government in connec-
tion with the present international situation.

Repeated to Department.

Knabenshue

Draft: PK
Encode: WJP



Paraphrase

TELEGRAM SENT

to: Secstate, Washington

Date: April 21, 10 p.m., 1939.

No.: 23

code: Confidential

Charged to: Office

070 1-1142

The following is strictly confidential and should not be published. My telegram no. 20, April 19, 1939, 3 p.m. I am informed by the British Chargé d'Affaires that the Iraqi Foreign Minister expected the German Minister to ask him the two following questions today: First. Did President Roosevelt obtain authorization from Iraq to list her among those countries he mentioned in his message to Hitler and Mussolini? Second. Has Iraq any fear of Germany?

The Chargé d'Affaires also stated that the Foreign Minister had informed him that he has concerted answers to these queries with the Minister of Saudi Arabia, who will be similarly questioned. Their answers will be in the following vein:

First. Iraq, as a member of the League, welcomed and thoroughly approved the action of President Roosevelt, although she had not authorized him to speak on her behalf.

Second. It is natural for Iraq to feel apprehensive of Germany's aggressive policy inasmuch as she has seen one state in Africa and three in Europe disappear. The development of her independence in security is her only desire.

Knabenshue

Draft: PK/JCS
Encode: WJP/JCS



OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO
SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

1941 4 30 1939



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

April 30, 1939

No. 362

To the American Minister Resident and Consul General,
Baghdad.

The Secretary of State quotes below, for the information
of and appropriate comment by the American Minister Resident
and Consul General, the text of a telegram of the Jewish
Telegraphic Agency from London under date of April 13, 1939:

"A Cairo dispatch to the News-Chronicle
said today that moves were under way to create
a coalition of Arab states in the Near East which
would 'present a united front to any attempts by
Italy or Germany to use the conquest of Albania
as a starting point for further aggression in the
Mediterranean.' The newspaper's special correspondent
reported that Tuesday's visit to Cairo by Dr.
Weizmann was interpreted in well-informed quarters
as a preliminary move in that direction.

"'Palestine', the correspondent said, 'is
recognized by the leaders of the Arab states as
the weakest link in the proposed defensive chain.
The activities of Arab terrorists in Palestine -
offering as they do an excellent opportunity for
Italian and German propaganda - must be ended
before Palestine can effectively take its place
in the defense scheme.'"

TOP SECRET

WJM

Baghdad, Iraq, July 11, 1939

No. 1535

Subject: Comments on a Press Report of the
Formation of an Arab Confederation.

Confidential

297

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Department's
memorandum instruction no. 362 of April 21, 1939,
requesting me to comment on a press despatch of the
Jewish Telegraphic Agency in London dated April 13,
1939, asserting that a movement was under way to cre-
ate a coalition of Arab states in the Near East which
would present a united front to any attempts by Ger-
many or Italy to use the conquest of Albania as a start-
ing point for further aggression in the Mediterranean.

The

The despatch added that the activities of the Arab terrorists in Palestine must be ended before Palestine, which is recognized as the weakest link in a proposed defensive chain, could effectively take its place in the defensive chain.

Upon the receipt of this instruction I mentioned this subject to Sayid Ali Jawdat, the Foreign Minister, who stated that while an Arab confederation was an ideal toward which the Arab states were working, nothing concrete was developing at the present time in the way of forming such a coalition. Subsequent developments would appear to bear this out for while, in the event of a European conflict, the Arab states would no doubt in their own best interests support Great Britain and France, they are at the moment opposing these two countries as to their respective policies in Palestine and Syria and they have not insisted on the termination of the activities of Arab terrorists in Palestine. Needless to say, the occupation of Albania by Italy did arouse deep resentment against the Axis Powers but this resentment does not appear to have been strong enough to have caused the formation of a coalition such as that reported by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

In connection with this general subject I venture to invite the Department's attention to my despatch no. 1192 of December 14, 1938, in which I reported that from many private conversations with General Nuri as-Said it was clear that while he believed

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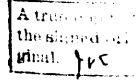
in a confederation of Arab states, he considered it impracticable of realization at the present time.

In commenting further on this question, I informed the Chief of the Near Eastern Division informally under date of April 28, 1939, that it is my personal opinion based upon the political history of the Arab peoples and my experience with them over a period of some twenty-eight years that there will never be an Arab federation similar to the federation of Swiss cantons or the federation of American states with a central government dominating the whole, unless such federation should be brought about by the conquest of the Arab countries by an Arab leader sufficiently powerful to impose his domination throughout the conquered territory. Even so he would soon meet with resistance and rebellion in various parts of the land and with any weakening of his power independent areas would soon be set up. On the other hand, it is entirely possible that if and when the various Arab territories develop politically independent governments they may form a loose federation bound together only by treaties guaranteeing mutual support against external aggression and possibly free trade and other frontier facilities among them, and possibly also other facilities of residence and travel more liberal than those granted to other foreigners.

Respectfully yours,

P. Knabenshue

R/JCS/jve
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TELEGRAM SENT

Secstate, Washington

Date: April 24, 4 p.m., 1939.

No.: 24

Charged to: Office

cc: Gray

*** 1-1142

My 16, April 13, 3 p.m. Foreign Office advises me that it has now been decided to hold a routine meeting of the Saadabad Powers in Teheran and that Iraq will be represented by the Director General of Foreign Affairs, Rashid Khoja, who left this morning. Teheran informed.

Knabenshue

Draft: *hn* JCS
Encode: WJP

TELEGRAM SENT

Embassy, Teheran

Date: April 24, 4 p.m., 1939.

No.: --

Mr. Gray

Charged to: Office

cc: 1-1142

Foreign Office advises me that the Director General of Foreign Affairs, Rashid Khoja, left for Teheran this morning to represent Iraq at a routine meeting of the Saadabad Powers. The Foreign Minister had formerly informed me that the meeting originally intended to be held in Teheran at this time had been cancelled as neither he nor the Turkish Foreign Minister could attend. Department has been informed.

Knabenshue

Draft: JCS
Encode: WJP

Jm

Paraphrase

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

TO: Amembassy, Ankara

Date: May 3, 1939, 5 p.m.

No.: --

RE: Confidential

Received: May 4, 11 a.m., 1939.

This Embassy has sent the following telegram
to the Department of State:

67 Please refer to my no. 40 of April 15, 1939,
2 p.m. I am advised by the Foreign Minister that the
conference recently held in Teheran produced no con-
crete results. Turkey was satisfied that the friend-
ship of the other members of the Saadabad Pact would
moreover sufficiently protect her on that side in
case of war, he stated, and had therefore felt it
unnecessary to seek more active support from them.

This telegram has been repeated to Teheran and
Baghdad.

MacMurray

Decode: WJP

Bughdad, May 12, 1939.

No. 1294

Subject: Review of the Political Situation in Iraq.

Confidential

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that since the death of the late King Ghazi on April 4 last and the murder on the same day by a mob of the British Consul at Mosul (my despatches nos. 1275 and 1276 of April 12) the outstanding development in the political field has been the effort of the Prime Minister, General Nuri as-Said to maintain control of the political forces of the country. In order to do so he has concentrated his efforts on the domestic situation, giving up the portfolio of Foreign Affairs and taking in its place that of the Interior

through

through the appointment of Ali Jawdat to the former position and the acceptance of the resignation of Naji Shawkat as Minister of Interior. He has continued his policy of carrying out a large number of dismissals of military and civil officials and has again defended his policy in a radio address to the nation. While the secondary elections for the new Parliament have been completed, it has been made known during the past few days that the primary elections have been postponed until next month, the excuse given being that the Government requires more time for the preparation of draft legislation to be presented to Parliament.

Other events of interest have been the passing of several sentences by the court martial sitting in Baghdad on those arrested for disturbing the peace in connection with King Ghazi's death and by the court martial sitting in Mosul on those tried for the murder of the British Consul there. Related to these trials has been the expulsion from Iraq of several Germans, including the former Chief of the Department of Antiquities, Dr. Julius Jordan, for alleged complicity in the dissemination of pamphlets and rumors accusing the British and the Nuri Government of responsibility for King Ghazi's death.

In spite of all efforts to convince the public that the death of King Ghazi was accidental (the automobile in which he met his death has not yet been removed from the place of the accident and has been visited by thousands of people) a large part of the population is apparently still convinced that his death was caused by a plot of some kind in some inexplicable way either by the Nuri Government or by the British or by both. On the day

after

after the death of the King, as reported in my despatch no. 1275 of April 12, several arrests were made on charges of disturbing the public peace and inciting the public to rebel against the state, and those persons were tried by the court martial which was organized at the time of the discovery of the recent plot against the late King Ghazi (my despatch no. 1264 of March 25). Sentences of imprisonment varying from three to fifteen years have now been passed by the court martial on several of the accused, among them a number of secondary school students, a warrant officer of the Iraqi army and some civilians. In giving its verdict the court martial, according to press reports, stated that the students who were arrested had formed a secret society whose original object was to combat foreign propaganda. On the day of the King's death, however, some of the members issued pamphlets asserting that the King had not died as a result of an accident but had been deliberately killed by a British plot supported by General Nuri and Rashid Ali al-Gailani (the late King's Private Secretary). The pamphlet then called on the people to rise against the Government and to avenge the death of the King. A translation of this pamphlet which was distributed in typewritten form (the Arabic text of which, incidentally, was given me by Dr. Grobba, the German Minister) is enclosed herewith.

The court in sentencing the prisoners took into consideration the fact that six students were under legal age, were inexperienced and had no previous conviction against them. They were each sentenced to three years imprisonment with a fine of ten dinars. Four other students were sentenced to fifteen lashes and a fine of ten

dinars.

dinars. Three students were sentenced to a fine of four dinars. The most severe sentence was passed on the warrant officer, who was found to have been the principal disturber of the peace on the day of the King's funeral and to have been responsible for spreading the rumor, which caused such terror in the city, that the Prime Minister had been killed. The court sentenced him to fifteen years rigorous imprisonment and two of his confederates were sentenced to seven years and five years respectively.

The court martial sitting in Mosul for the sole purpose of trying those accused of responsibility for the murder of Mr. Monck-Mason, the British Consul, passed several sentences in the latter part of April. Two students were sentenced to death and two to ten years hard labor. The two death sentences, however, were commuted to fifteen years hard labor as both criminals were found by the court to be less than eighteen years of age. In addition, two coolies received sentences of eight years hard labor, one soldier a sentence of five years, and twenty persons were placed on three years probation under bond of 400 dinars each to respect peace and order and to refrain from any act which might result in the disturbance of peace.

In addition to the foregoing sentences, as mentioned above and as reported in my telegram no. 19 of April 18, 11 a.m., Dr. Jordan and a number of other Germans, among them a munitions salesman by the name of Steffen, have been expelled from Iraq as being responsible in part at least for the propaganda against the Nuri Government and the British resulting in Mr. Monck-Mason's death and the disturbances in Baghdad and other parts of Iraq following the King's death.

As the Department was informed in my telegram no. 22 of April 21, 1931, Naji Shawkat, the Minister of Interior, left Baghdad on that day for Ankara, reportedly on an important mission to discuss the international situation with the Turkish Government. At that time there were rumors that his departure was a maneuver on the part of General Nuri to get him out of the Ministry of Interior. Whether or not this is so, General Nuri immediately assumed charge of the Ministry of Interior and ordered a great many changes among the mutassarifs and other administrative officials of the country without consulting Naji Shawkat. This action on the part of the Prime Minister is stated to have led to the former's resignation, which was announced on May 1, no reason therefor being given. It is reported that upon the receipt of his resignation he was offered his former position of Minister to Turkey. He apparently declined the offer, however, and has now returned to Baghdad, nurturing the hope, according to some of his friends, that he may be the next Prime Minister. General Nuri, in the meantime, continues to act as Minister of Interior in addition to his duties as Prime Minister.

In order to be able to devote his time to domestic matters, General Nuri gave up the position of Foreign Minister, and, as reported in my telegram no. 25 of April 28, 12 noon, named Ali Jawdat as Minister for Foreign Affairs. Ali Jawdat al-Ayyubi (generally known however only as Ali Jawdat), although out of office for the last few years, has had many years of political experience in Iraq. He was born in Mosul in 1886 and was educated at the Military College at Istanbul. He was named

Minister

Minister of Interior in 1923, was Minister of Finance in 1930, Private Secretary to the King in 1933, Prime Minister in 1934 and President of the Chamber of Deputies in 1935. Later in 1935 he went to London as Iraqi Minister and subsequently became Minister in Paris.

On the night of April 29 General Nuri made another radio address to the nation. The Department will recall that he first addressed the nation by radio shortly after assuming office on December 25 last. A few days before King Ghazi's death and shortly after the plot against the Throne had been discovered, General Nuri, as reported in my despatch no. 1274 of April 11, again delivered a radio address to the nation in which he discussed the policy of his Cabinet. On this occasion, it will be recalled, he explained the necessity of dismissing or retiring many military and civil officials and the necessity of keeping the army out of politics. He also discussed the serious financial condition of the country and his Government's foreign policy. In his speech of April 29, however, a summarized translation of which as published in the "Iraq Times" is enclosed herewith, he discussed mainly the necessity of raising the standard of administration by the elimination of incapable officials and the subject of the internal enemies of the State. With reference to the dismissals, he asserted that a number of officials were incapable, lazy and immoral and that it was not in the interest of the State that they should remain in their positions. The principal part of his address, however, was devoted to an outspoken attack on what the Prime Minister claimed were the dangerous activities of plotters against the welfare and even the existence of

the

the State. Such plotters, he asserted, were members of the Union and Progress Party, which party had from the first been an enemy of the Arab cause. While he did not name these members, it is assumed by the public that he was directing his attack mainly against the former Prime Minister, Hikmet Suleiman, who is now under sentence of five years imprisonment for complicity in connection with the plot against King Ghazi and whose older brother had been the leader of the "Young Turks" movement. He and other members of the "Young Turks" were, according to the Prime Minister, responsible for General Bekir Sidqi's coup d'etat of 1936, which has resulted in such a train of unfortunate consequences for the country.

In connection with the plot for which Hikmet Suleiman and a number of others received death sentences (later commuted to various terms of imprisonment) I enclose for the Department's records a summary of the decisions of the court martial which sat in their trials as published in the "Iraq Times". It will be noted that the court claimed to have established beyond doubt the guilt of Hikmet Suleiman. Whether or not this is so, the Government has chosen to treat him leniently and I understand that his family and friends are permitted to visit him at will in the local prison where he is being detained and where he has been furnished comfortable quarters. The others who were found guilty, however, are reported to be receiving the severest kind of treatment.

From all the foregoing and as was to be expected following King Ghazi's death, it will be seen that General Nuri is in a difficult political situation and is making strenuous efforts to maintain his Government in power.

He

He has already found it necessary to take some measures, such as the censorship of the press, similar to those of which he accused the Midfai Government which he overthrew, and it is even rumored that he has had warnings given to a number of his political enemies that they should leave the country. Also, as previously stated, he has found it advisable to postpone the completion of the parliamentary elections. It is assumed that when these elections are completed a great number of former members of Parliament will find themselves out of office. Under the system of indirect elections which is used here it is usually possible for the Government in power, in the absence of a strong opposition party, to control the elections. General Nuri is thus, through the dismissal of a large number of army and civil officials whom he has publicly characterized as being incapable and dishonest, creating more enemies every day and it is probable that the importance and power of his enemies will grow when the election returns are finally announced and many important members of former Governments find themselves entirely out of office. General Nuri is frequently accused by his enemies of devoting his energies to the Arab cause and to foreign affairs to the exclusion of the welfare of Iraq itself. He, on the other hand, no doubt hopes that a successful settlement of the Palestine situation in favor of the Arabs will enhance his prestige in the country. Whatever the ultimate outcome, he is now, it appears, devoting his energies principally to domestic matters. His ability to remain in office will of course in the end depend largely on his ability to maintain

control

control of the army. If he is not able to do so, it is to be feared that Iraq will be faced with continued and serious political disturbances in the current year.

Respectfully yours,

F. Knabenshue

Enclosures:

1. Translation of pamphlet distributed after the King's death.
2. Summary of Prime Minister's Speech.
3. Summary of court martial proceedings.

File no. 800

JCS/wjp.

Enclosure No. 1 to despatch No. 1074 of May 12, 1939
from American Legation at Baghdad, Iraq.

TRANSLATION

ARAB UNITY YOUNG MEN'S ASSOCIATION
BAGHDAD

O GHAZI, O KING

O the grieved Arab people O the distressed young patriots
They have killed Ghazi

The British hated to see Ghazi acting to realize the Arab unity. The British began to fear Ghazi and his immortal efforts towards the Arab unity. They proceeded to weave plots and intrigues to hit Iraq and its King, assisted by treacherous renegades amongst whom is Nuri as-Said, the advocate of British rule in Iraq and the strengthener of its foundation, and his right hand man, Rashid Ali al-Gailani, the advocate of imperialism also.

You have no alternative, O sorrowful people, but to declare your universal revolution against the British and the advocates of the British.

Here we stand before you, ready to lead you.
Success comes from Allah.

To revenge! to revolution! to justice!

To: JNC/AJL/jnc.

702
Enclosure to despatch no. 1294 of May 12, 1939, from
the American Legation at Baghdad, Iraq.

Source: The Iraq Times, May 1, 1939.

BROADCAST by IRAQI PREMIER

Plots Against the State

A WARNING

An important speech was broadcast to the nation by the Prime Minister of Iraq, H.E. Sayid Nuri as-Said, on Saturday night. He dealt mainly with two subjects—

1. The necessity of raising the standard of administration in Iraq, by the elimination of incapable officials and more public participation in administrative problems.
2. Internal enemies of the State, whom he bitterly denounced in outspoken language.

He began his speech by assuring the nation that his Cabinet was doing everything in its power to fulfil the promises it had made to the nation. Amendments of the administrative machinery were being prepared to ensure a large measure of decentralisation to serve local requirements.

Inefficient officials

His Excellency went on to say that a number of officials were known for their incapacity, laziness, and immorality, and it was not in the interests of the State that they should remain at their posts.

A special decree had already been issued dispensing with the services of such officials, and they would be replaced by more competent men.

The Electoral Law, he said, would be amended in such a way as to ensure complete freedom for the people in the election of their representatives in Parliament, without influence on the part of the local authorities.

Plots Against the State

Sayid Nuri as-Said then went on to deal with the dangerous activities of plotters against the welfare, and even the existence, of the State.

"Among the heritage left by Ottoman rule in lands where it previously held sway are strange sections of the people who live by making mischief and working against the interests of the country in which they are living. Wherever they have been they have always been a source of danger. If we study the history of the Committee of Union and Progress, whose word was law during the last years of the Ottoman Empire, we find that its tyranny was actually the cause of that empire's downfall.

"Members of the Union and Progress Party were responsible for the hanging of many of the Arab leaders during the Great War, and at a later date they endeavoured to stir up rebellion against the national government of the late Kemal Ataturk. In the end the Kemalists were compelled to remove them from the public life of the country in order to rid the State of a growing danger.

"The Party of Union and Progress was actually responsible for the downfall of the young Syrian State which was set up under his late Majesty King Faisal.

"Twenty years ago the leaders of that dangerous movement were hostile to the proposal to set up an independent State in this

country, and they did their best to place obstacles in the way.

"On my return to Iraq in 1921 to help in the establishment of the new State the first thing that attracted my attention was the activities of these people, and I made a statement to 'Al Iraq' drawing attention to the danger to the country of plotters belonging to the Union and Progress Party in Iraq.

The Army and Politics

"Eighteen years have passed since I issued that warning, and if we review what has happened since it is clear that I did not exaggerate. With the lapse of time the dangers to which I referred have actually increased. No better example could be quoted than the coup d'état of 1936, exposing the country to the greatest menace.

"These mischief-makers were responsible for the interference of the Army in politics. Men who had spent the best years of their life in building up the State were compelled to disappear from the country; banishment, imprisonment, and death were their reward.

"Now that the country has fortunately been able to resume its normal life have these people thought of putting an end to their activities? No! On the contrary, they even used the opportunity given to them by the death of our beloved King to stir up trouble. Is not this proof of the fact that they have no conscience at all?

Iraq's Greatest Danger

"You will see, therefore, that this coterie of people have become a great menace to the country—a greater menace, indeed, than any external danger now confronting us. The nation cannot afford to allow them to continue their plots against the State. That the people are well aware of the danger was demonstrated by the general dissatisfaction when a reduction of their sentences was recently announced.

"No nation can continue on the path of progress as long as the daggers of internal enemies are directed towards its heart, and no government with a due sense of its responsibilities can remain idle in such circumstances. I therefore appeal to all sincere Iraqis to unite in the service of their country. In the meantime I warn mischief-makers that the Government is watching them carefully, and that the laws of the country will be firmly applied against them if the

Inclosure No. 3 to despatch No. R94 of May 12, 1939
from American Legation at Baghdad, Iraq.

SOURCE: THE IRAQ TIMES
April 3, 1939,
Baghdad.

- COPY -

Summary of Court Martial Proceedings in
Plot against the Throne.

The local newspapers publish a précis of the decisions reached by the court martial which was sitting recently at Al-Rashid Army Headquarters. The public Prosecutor demanded that the accused should be tried under Article 7 of the Iraq Army Proclamation (Section 13). The court heard the evidence of the accused and enabled them to appoint advocates for the defence. Evidence was given by H.H. Amir Abdul Ilah, Jawad Husain (as witness), Baha ud-Din Nagashbandi, Al-Aqid Abbas Fadhilli, Ahmad Jowdat, Al Aqid Ali Ghalib Ismail, Al Aqid Qasim Shukri, Al-Zaim Shakir Ali, Muqaddam Mahmud Salman, Al Aqid Salih Saib (as witness), Jalal ud-Din as-Saadi, Rais Said Taha, Rais Dhanun Taha, Soldier-Driver Jamal Rifat, Farash Amin Haj Muhammad (servant of the accused Hilmi Abdul Karim), Hasan ibn Ajil, Rasul ibn Naji, Hasan Beg ibn Weis (Beg of the Dalu tribe), Rashid ibn Muhammad, Ahmad ibn Haj Jawad (known as "Abu Agrab"), Salih ibn Aidan of the Jabur tribe, and Abdalla Damaluji.

The court (the statement proceeds) interrogated these witnesses and examined documents found in the houses of a number of the accused. The court found that a conspiracy was organised, with its headquarters in Baghdad, during the life-time of the last Cabinet, with the object of overthrowing the existing regime and killing from 40 to 50 Army commanders and senior State officials (including members of the present Cabinet). The victims were to have been invited to an entertainment at the house of H.H. Amir Abdul Ilah, where approximately 250 persons were to have assembled, including the men who were to be assassinated and those who were detailed to carry out the crime. Rais Abdul Hadi paved the way for Rais Hilmi Abdul Karim to get in touch with H.H. Amir Abdul Ilah. Later Rais Hilmi Abdul Karim, in the presence of Rais Abdul Hadi, broached the idea of a conspiracy to his Highness, giving the names of the senior Army officers whom it was proposed to kill.

Altogether Rais Hilmi visited his Highness on no fewer than ten occasions, sometimes alone and on other occasions accompanied by Rais Abdul Hadi. Rais Hilmi emphasised to his Highness that there were "reliable" people available who would carry out the assassinations in Baghdad, Mosul, and Kirkuk. The link in the chain between Baghdad and the provincial towns was Jawad Husain, who was piloting the Iraq Aeroplane Society's planes on flights between Baghdad and various parts of the country. He carried correspondence between the conspirators in Baghdad and those in the provinces. In Mosul Ismail

Abbawi

Abbawi and his brother Ahmad were the principal conspirators. This was proved by letters found in their houses. These letters also proved the complicity of Hikmat Sulaiman, Hilmi Abdul Karim, and Jawad Husain in the plot. A quantity of arms, including rifles and revolvers, were found in the houses of the Abbawis. The statement goes on to say that Hikmat Sulaiman's guilt was further proved by letters traced at Mosul, by the evidence of witnesses, and by deductions from his own statements to the court.

In view of the evidence which had been placed before them, the court martial unanimously decided to pass the death sentence on Hilmi Abdul Karim (after his dismissal from the Army) and on Yunis Abbawi and his brother Ismail Abbawi. The court also decided, by a majority, to pass the death sentence on Jawad Hussain and on Hikmat Sulaiman. Others, as reported at the time, were sentenced to terms of imprisonment. With regard to Al-Aqid Salih Saib, the court decided that he should be acquitted as there was no evidence to prove his active participation in the plot: he was, however, deprived of two years' seniority, and fined a month's pay, because he failed to report to his commanding officer facts which had come to his knowledge. As our readers are aware, all the men who were sentenced to death were later reprieved by the clemency of His Majesty the King and they are now undergoing various terms of imprisonment. Since the court martial, Al Aqid Salih Saib has been placed on pension.

Baghdad, May 25, 1939.

No. 1299

Subject: Political Conditions in the Persian Gulf.

SLF

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

As of possible interest I have the honor to enclose a memorandum of a conversation with Dr. P. W. Harrison, who called on me a short time ago while passing through Baghdad enroute to the United States. Dr. Harrison has spent many years in the Persian Gulf as a medical missionary, more recently in Muscat, and it is believed that his comments on the political situation in Muscat, Bahrein and Kuwait as well as in Saudi Arabia will be of interest to the Department.

With

With reference to his comments on the development of the oil industry in those regions and the formal opening of a pipeline and oil port at Ras Tanura by the California Arabian Standard Oil Company, the Department will recall that a detailed report on oil developments in Hasa and the Bahrein Islands will be found in my despatch no. 1282 of April 22, 1939.

According to press despatches the ceremonies at the Company's camp at Dammam and at Ras Tanura lasted for several days and were terminated with the actual inauguration of the pipeline on May 1st. In this connection, it may be of interest to note that whereas hitherto little or nothing concerning oil developments in the Province of Hasa in Saudi Arabia has been reported by the local press, considerable publicity has been given to the visit of King Ibn Saud to Hasa for the purpose of inspecting the developments in the concessionary area of the California Arabian Standard Oil Company in that province and the inauguration of the pipeline. According to these press reports, King Ibn Saud was accompanied on this visit to Hasa by several of his sons and a suite of two hundred or more people and was entertained on an elaborate scale by the California Arabian Standard Oil Company. Also present at these ceremonies, according to the press, was Shaikh Hamid bin Isa al-Khalifah, the ruler of Bahrein, his brothers and sons and a large suite.

After the termination of the ceremonies at Ras Tanura, King Ibn Saud and suite are reported to have visited Bahrein Island as the guest of Shaikh Hamid, where they were lavishly entertained for four days. Also, according to one report, among the presents which

Shaiikh

Shaikh Hamid made to King Ibn Saud were ten motor cars which he had had sent from Bombay. The King returned to Saudi Arabia on May 6.

In this connection I may add that the riots to which Dr. Harrison referred as having taken place on Bahrain Island are believed to have been those which occurred last November. According to an American citizen residing on the Island, a group of young men at that time organized a demonstration against the Bahrain Government. They apparently felt that many reforms were needed in the Government and in the schools. Someone revealed the plan for the demonstration to the Chief of Police and as soon as it was started the demonstrators were arrested. There was no fighting of any kind and apparently no firearms were carried. The leader of the demonstration was tried at once and sentenced to imprisonment, part of which was to be served in India and part in Bahrain. This incident, according to our informant, has been magnified and is occasionally referred to as a "revolution".

Respectfully yours,

P. Knabenshue

Enclosure:

Copy of Confidential Memorandum of Conversation with Dr. P.W. Harrison.

File no. 800
JCS/wjp.

Enclosure to Despatch No. 1299 of May 25, 1939,
from the American Legation, Baghdad, Iraq.

COPY

Confidential

Baghdad, April 29, 1959.

Memorandum of Conversation

Subject: Political Conditions in the Persian Gulf.

Dr. P. W. Harrison, the well-known American Medical Missionary at Muscat, called on the Minister today. His comments on political conditions in the Persian Gulf may be of interest.

Dr. Harrison was of the opinion that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was not in as healthy a condition as hitherto. The Crown Prince, he said, has become fat and lazy, taxes are extremely heavy and imposed with great severity, and the Government is becoming more and more avaricious for the oil revenues which are now coming in from the Hasa oil fields operated by the California Arabian Standard Oil Company. In connection with the latter, he said that the new pipeline at Ras Tanura had been formally opened about a week ago by King Ibn Saud and the first tanker had already been loaded from it. (The opening date was apparently advanced more than a week as the Legation had been advised by the Company that May 1st had been set as the date.)

Muscat, said Dr. Harrison, is the poorest of all the countries in Arabia and there the poverty is the most noticeable. There too, however, the influence of oil is being felt. Two American geologists, Messrs. Thompson and Hotchkiss, have made a thorough geological survey of the country for the I.P.C., having made extensive use of aerial photography. While nothing definite has been reported, Dr. Harrison has the impression that the geologists are convinced that oil will be found there.

Mentioning the recent riots at Dubair on the Trucial Coast, where, according to a press item appearing in a Basrah paper, riots had recently occurred as reported in our Current Events despatch of April 27, Dr. Harrison said that these reports were not as exaggerated as we had been led to believe, as at least 32 were killed by actual count. The cause of the riots was, as in Kuwait, a desire to gain political control over the ruling Shaikh in view of the probability of oil being found there with the subsequent enrichment for the Shaikh from oil revenues.

As to Bahrain, Dr. Harrison commented on the great fortune which the Shaikh of those islands is accumulating from oil revenues. Referring to the riots which had occurred there several months ago, he understood that a good many sentences of five years imprisonment had been imposed on the rioters, half of which sentences were to be spent in India and half in Bahrain.

Dr. Harrison had also stopped at Kuwait. Most of the Shaikh's enemies have left the Amirate following their

recent

recent political difficulties there, while one was executed and several were imprisoned. Two excellent oil wells have been brought in by the company operating in Kuwait and a third is almost completed. The company has not yet started exporting its oil, however, and is in no hurry to do so.

The discovery of oil, added Dr. Harrison, is changing the whole life of the Persian Gulf and is likewise changing the problems of the American missionaries stationed there, for oil has already been found in Kuwait and Bahrain and will probably be found in Muscat, the three places American missions are maintained. He felt that the effect on the people was not for the good, but he seemed to have some hope that the riches which oil was bringing to that region would result eventually in breaking down the fanatical control which the Moslem religion now has on the people.

JCS

File no. 800/863.6
JCS/wjp.

Baghdad, June 7, 1939.

No. 1307

Subject: Organization in Iraq of a Nationalistic
and Pan-Arab "Youth Army".

Confidential

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that the older students in the Government schools of Iraq have received military training as a part of the required curriculum for more than a year, devoting one afternoon a week to drill. This development was, however, inconspicuous until the advent of General Nuri as-Said's Government, which took office on Christmas Day, 1938. The new Government, apparently desiring to inspire nationalistic feelings in the youth of Iraq, has embarked on a movement called the "Jaish al-Futuwwah" or Youth Army, which shows signs of being influenced by the youth movements of Germany and

Italy.

Italy. As in those countries also, there are indications that it is being organized and used by the Government for political purposes.

The movement did not begin to develop rapidly, however, until the appointment in March of Dr. Sami Showkat, former Director General of Health, as Director General of Education, (my despatch no. 1258 of March 16). Sayid Naji Showkat had been appointed Minister of Interior in the new Nuri Government and this immediately increased the influence of his brothers, Dr. Sami Showkat and Dr. Saib Showkat, the latter being Chief Surgeon of the Royal Hospital and with Dr. Sami a founder of the ultra-nationalistic Muthanna Club. Naji Showkat has since resigned as Minister of Interior but the influence of his brothers in the nationalistic movement continues. Both are physicians trained under German professors in Istanbul and have the reputation of being pro-Nazi and pro-Fascist.

As soon as Dr. Sami Showkat had been appointed Director General of Education, he began to develop the military training of the students into what is called a national youth movement. Even before he took office, however, the new Government had given indications of its intentions of promoting such a movement. A parade of all students receiving military training was held at the end of January, at the conclusion of which they were addressed by the new Minister of Education, Sayid Salih Jaber, who spoke from a platform surrounded by microphones and with other trappings so familiar to similar meetings in Germany and Italy. His speech at that time was reported as stirringly pan-Arab and he called upon the youth of Iraq to unite and make sacrifices for the

Arab nation. This parade is believed to have done much to popularize the movement, as did the next parade of students through the streets of Baghdad on March 21st, the birthday anniversary of the late King Ghazi.

Soon after Dr. Sami Showkat took office it was made compulsory for all Government students in Iraq to join the Youth Army, irrespective of age, and shortly afterwards an order was issued compelling them to wear uniforms at all times. This latter order was also made to apply to the teachers and officials of the Ministry of Education.

Under further instructions which have recently been issued by the Ministry of Education, the head of the Youth Army will be the Minister of Education who has been given the rank and title of "Marshal of the Youth Army", while Dr. Sami Showkat has given himself the picturesque title of "Protector of the Youth Movement". The officials and teachers of the Ministry of Education have been given ranks from general to second lieutenant according to their grade and pay.

The students of the Youth Army, under these instructions, are divided into three classes, the Juveniles, consisting of all under fourteen; the Rovers, made up of the two lower classes of the secondary schools; and the Futuwh, or Youths proper, consisting of all students senior to the first two groups. These latter are all given rank equivalent to non-commissioned officers of the regular army and wear the corresponding chevrons. The senior members of this group are drilled with rifles and are given instruction in musketry. All the military training is under the direction of or given directly by

army

army officers, the chief of whom is Major Fadhl al-Janabi, who is assigned as adviser to the Ministry of Education. It is he who led an Iraqi youth delegation to the last Nuremberg rally (it will be recalled that they were ordered to leave Germany hurriedly when, toward the end of September, it appeared that Iraq was about to become a military ally of Great Britain) and the uniform now worn was designed for that occasion.

Soon after Dr. Sami Showkat became Director General of Education, he began making speeches to the students in the various schools he visited which were the cause of considerable comment, for he was reported as telling the students that the most important thing for them to learn was how to kill and how to die. It is further reported that he instructed the teachers to devote some of their lessons to talks on "The Technique of Death". As perhaps being typical of Dr. Sami Showkat's ideas along this line, the following excerpt from a speech delivered on March 29 as quoted in "Al-Bilad" on March 30 may be of interest:

"I hereafter shall permit no one to make any propaganda for peace and shall oppose anyone who advocates peace. We want war. We should shed our blood for the sake of the Arabism and the Arabs. We should die for our national cause. We should be impregnated with military spirit."

In line with this speech, Dr. Sami Showkat not only permitted but encouraged the Youth Army to stage another parade and public manifestation on March 31 as a protest against the French policy in Syria.

There can be little doubt but that these extreme doctrines of Dr. Sami Showkat's, linked with the

nationalistic

nationalistic feelings aroused in the youth during these anti-French demonstrations, had considerable influence in encouraging the extremists among the students to carry out the excesses on the day of King Ghazi's death for which a number were tried by court martial and received prison sentences. These influences no doubt had a similar unfortunate effect in stirring up the students of Mosul which lead to the demonstration resulting in the tragic death of Mr. Monck-Mason, the British Consul. The fact that those students who were condemned to death by court martial for their part in the Consul's death had their sentences commuted because of their youth can hardly be expected to act as a deterrent in the future.

There is in truth some reason to believe that this movement is having a profound effect on the school boys of Iraq and is developing their nationalistic sentiments to a dangerously high degree. It would probably be difficult to prove that this movement is receiving any direct financial support from Germany and Italy, although many are convinced that this is so. It goes without saying, however, that these two Powers are sympathetic towards this movement and would be glad to encourage it in any way they could.

In conclusion, I enclose a translation of an article from "Al-Iraq" of May 26 which exemplifies the influence which the youth movement is having on the Iraqi press. The article, entitled "Lead a Rigorous Life for Luxurious Living Removes Blessings", bases its thesis on this saying of Mohammed as an encouragement to the development of nationalistic feelings among the Arab youth.

Respectfully

Respectfully yours,

P. Knabenshue

Enclosure:

Article from "Al-Iraq".

File no. 800
JCS/wjp.

Copies to: Cairo, Beirut, Jerusalem.

Enclosure to despatch No. 1307 of June 7, 1939
from American Legation at Baghdad, Iraq.

TRANSLATION

SOURCE: AL-IRAQ
May 26, 1939,
Baghdad.

"LEAD A RIGOROUS LIFE FOR LUXURIOUS LIVING
REMOVES BLESSINGS."

This is the Hadith* of the noble Arab Prophet who built the foundations of his rising on the spirit of manliness and courage before which nothing can stand to prevent the realization of the aspiration of a soul infused with that spirit. The Arab nation kept progressing as long as it observed the virtues of this Hadith. When the foreigners, who were not like the Arabs born with loyalty and truth in their march towards high ideals, entered the services of the governments of the Arab nations, these governments took to luxurious living which is expressed by the Hadith with which we have headed this article as the remover of blessings. These blessings vanished and with them perished the governments. In view of the strength, faith and shining truth embodied in this Hadith, the Director General of Education has decided that this Hadith be inscribed on large signboards to be posted at the entrances of all Government schools, about 850 in number. He has also decided that it should be inscribed on the Futuwwa** badges which boy scouts and Futuwwa youths place on their headgear.

We therefore hope that the day will not be distant when we shall see this motto as the motto of the Iraqi people in particular and the Arab nation in general and when our history will repeat itself in proportion to our keeping away from luxurious living, accustoming ourselves to rough living and bearing hardships for the sake of upholding Arabism.

To: JNC/AJL/jnc.

* The body of traditions carried back to Mohammed, or to those of his generation, and constituting the basis of the Sunna (or norm) i.e. orthodox rite (Webster's International Dictionary).

** Youth movement.

Baghdad, Iraq, June 28, 1939

No. 1326

Subject: Official Visit to Saudi Arabia of the
Iraqi Foreign Minister, Ali Jawdat al-
Ayoubi.

AIRMAIL

Confidential

800/030

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Sayid Ali Jawdat al-Ayoubi, left Baghdad for Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, on what was announced as an official mission to the court of King Ibn Saud on June 24 last. He was accompanied by a delegation which included Sayid Abbas Mahdi, a former Cabinet minister, Colonel Salah-ud-din es-Sabah, a senior army officer, and a number of Foreign Office officials. According to press reports they are travelling to Riyadh by the overland route through Kuwait.

Sayid Rustam Haidar, Minister of Finance, has been named Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs during the absence of Sayid Ali Jawdat.

According to the press the purpose of Sayid Ali Jawdat's

Jawdat's visit to Riyadh is to discuss problems of mutual interest between the two countries such as those of the nomadic tribes along the frontier and grazing rights. In this connection reference is made to my despatch no. 1042 of May 25, 1938, reporting the conclusion in April of that year of two agreements between the Kingdoms of Iraq and Saudi Arabia, one concerning the administration of the neutral zone between the two countries and the other relating to grazing and water rights along the common frontier. These two agreements have not yet been ratified nor, so far as is known, published. They were, however, submitted a few days ago to the new Parliament for ratification.

The real reasons which have lead the Iraqi Government to send this delegation to Riyadh, an arduous undertaking during the hot summer months, are however quite different, I am told. According to a reliable source King Ibn Saud some time ago addressed a letter to General Nuri es-Said, the Prime Minister, in which he made certain observations concerning the Iraqi position vis-a-vis Syria and Palestine. The significance of these observations is not quite clear but it is understood that the King was disturbed at the alleged efforts being made by the Iraqi Government to have a member of the Hashimite family placed on the throne of Syria, inasmuch as he is anxious that one of his own sons be selected should the occasion arise. It seems that news of the existence of this letter leaked to the press and a garbled version was published in the Egyptian newspaper Al-Ahram and copied in the Syrian press. As a result the Saudi Arabian Consulate in Damascus issued to the press the following statement, as quoted in the Iraqi press:

"Certain newspapers in Syria and Lebanon have copied from Al-Ahram a news item to the effect that the Iraqi Government has received a letter from King Ibn Saud disagreeing with the efforts of the Iraqi Government and its outstanding activities in support of the Syrian and Palestine causes and that certain Syrian personalities who have visited Baghdad recently have semi-officially learned of this letter which led to the suspension of the endeavours of Iraq on behalf of Syria and Palestine. The Saudi Arabian Consulate therefore expresses its displeasure at the publication by the Arab press of this strange and false news item, because His Majesty's legal and rightful endeavours towards the Arab states in general and Syria and Palestine in particular are known to every understanding and sensible person. While we can do nothing to those who harbour mean intentions, we emphatically deny this alleged news item in order to announce the undoubted truth."

The Iraqi press also published the following statement issued by the Iraqi Director General of Propaganda, Publications,

Publications, and Broadcasting:

"Al-Ahram of Egypt published in its issue of Saturday, June 17, 1939, a message from its private correspondent in Damascus entitled: 'Syria and Palestine and the attitude of the Arabs thereto - A strange rumour concerning a letter alleged to have been attributed to King Ibn Saud.' The contents of that message are not true and the amicable and brotherly relations existing between the Iraqi and Saudi Arabian Kingdoms compel them to follow one policy in all public matters and in Arab affairs in particular."

As a result of the misunderstanding between the two governments and the ensuing annoyance of King Ibn Saud, caused by this publicity, the Iraqi Government, according to my informant, decided to send Sayid Ali Jawdat on this mission to Riyadh for the purpose of placating King Ibn Saud.

Another purpose of his visit is said to be in connection with a dispute over the location of the Iraqi-Saudi Arabian boundary. The Iraqi-Saudi Arabian commission which has been surveying the boundary was unable to reach an agreement as to its location some distance west of the neutral zone where a number of wells are located. The Saudi Arabian Government, it seems, claims certain wells which, according to the Iraqis, are at least one hundred miles north of the frontier. By following these tactics it is thought that King Ibn Saud hopes to obtain at least some of the wells in this district. The Iraqi delegation will therefore attempt to reach a settlement on this point also. It is of interest to note in passing that King Ibn Saud's representatives on this commission were two young American civil engineers loaned by the California Arabian Standard Oil Company.

Another question which will possibly be taken up is that of furnishing Iraqi army officers to train the army which it is understood King Ibn Saud wishes to organize along modern lines with the oil royalties now being received from the California Arabian Oil Company. In this connection an article published in Al-Bilad of June 9 may be of interest. According to this article reports had been published that Saudi Arabia had requested the Turkish Government to send a military mission to organize the new Saudi Arabian army. Al-Bilad stated that it had investigated this report and had been informed by a prominent Saudi Arabian official that while the relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia were of the best and while the latter would not hesitate to invite such a Turkish mission, such a request had not yet been made. The Iraqi Government is no doubt anxious in view of these reports that

that Iraqi and not Turkish army officers should be selected for this task.

Finally it may not be out of place to mention here the rumours that have surrounded the recent visit to Iraq of Aziz Ali al-Misri Pasha, Inspector General of the Egyptian army, who is a popular figure in this country and a close friend of General Nuri and other well-known Iraqis who participated in the Arab revolt. Misri Pasha was wined and dined here and made much of both by the Government and by opponents of the Government. According to these rumours his purpose in coming to Iraq was to bring the message that the recent Anglo-Turkish agreement was directed against the Arabs and to urge the Iraqi Government to send an ultimatum to the British Government insisting on Arab rights in Palestine and Syria if the British Government were to expect further support from the Arabs. According to these same rumours, which come from fairly reliable sources, General Nuri and his former Minister of Interior, Naji Shawket, refused to accept this thesis and insisted that the Iraqi Government must continue to cooperate closely with Britain, but Misri Pasha did however win over Jamil al-Medfai, the former Prime Minister, and the brothers Tewfik and Naji Suweidi to his point of view. If there is in fact any truth in these reports it is more than likely that this question of high policy is under discussion in all the Arab countries and that Ali Jawdat would wish to discuss it with the King.

Respectfully yours,

P. Knabenshue

PK/JCS/jvs
File no. 800/030

Copies to: American Legation, Cairo
American Consul General, Beirut
American Consul General, Jerusalem

A true copy of
the original copy
and PK

Baghdad, Iraq, July 11, 1939

No. 1336

Subject: Iraqi Foreign Policy: the British White Paper on Palestine.

800/840.1

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to enclose as of possible interest a summary of a recent debate in the Iraqi Parliament on Iraq's foreign policy as published in the "Iraq Times" of July 7, 1939. The discussion arose during the debate on appropriations for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. When Iraq's relations with her ally Great Britain came up for discussion some deputies complained that Iraq was now

regarded

regarded by Great Britain as a factor of minor importance in its foreign policy and that the Government was not doing all that it should to emphasize Iraq's strategic importance. These deputies asserted that difficulties had been placed by Great Britain in the way of the realization of the national aspirations of the Arabs and they urged the Government to do everything in its power to support the Arab cause, contending that it was not enough merely to reject the British White Paper on Palestine and to maintain a passive attitude.

The Prime Minister, General Nuri as-Said, in reply to these complaints asserted that Iraq's foreign relations are influenced by two important factors, the Saadabad Pact and the Pact of Arab Brotherhood with Saudi Arabia and the Yemen, adding that his Government earnestly hoped that the latter pact would shortly be extended to include Egypt. As to Palestine he said that his Government had always supported the demand for the establishment of a free Arab Government and the ending of the Zionist policy in that country.

Speaking on the subject of foreign credits General Nuri referred to the credits recently granted by Great Britain to Turkey and Rumania and stated that Great Britain had expressed her readiness to give a similar credit to Iraq to enable it to increase its defenses. (See in this connection my despatch no. 1330 of July 7, 1939, entitled "Financial and Budgetary Situation of Iraq: Conclusion of a Loan for £5,000,000"). The Minister of Finance, Sayid Rustam

Haidar,

Haider, entered the debate in a warm defense of General Nuri and it would appear from the nature of his defense that the Government is becoming acutely aware of the many enemies it has made since taking office last December.

In connection with the Iraqi Government's position concerning the British White Paper, the Department will recall that I stated in my despatch no. 1327 of June 29 reporting, in continuation of previous despatches on Iraqi reaction to the White Paper, that the Iraqi Government had as yet made no official statement concerning it. On July 3, however, in a meeting of the Chamber of Deputies, the Prime Minister, replying to a question, was quoted by the local press as saying that it was "only natural that Iraq should reject the British White Paper on Palestine." In reply to another question regarding the alleged entry of Zionists into Iraq, General Nuri was quoted as saying that investigations had proved that no Zionists had entered Iraq recently and that if any Zionists attempted to do so without permission they would be sent back at once. A day or two later the press announced that the Minister of Interior had decided to forbid the entry into Iraq of all means of Zionist propaganda such as newspapers and publications of all kinds in whatever language they might be published.

It may also be of interest to report that in a meeting of the Chamber of Deputies on July 5, a deputy inquired whether the Acting Foreign Minister

(Rustum)

(Rustum Haidar) had read Mr. Amery's statement concerning the White Paper as published in the British press, pointing out that Mr. Amery is President of the Iraq Currency Board. The deputy inquired whether it would be in the best interests of Iraq to have Mr. Amery continue in this post after having shown his "hostility to the Arabs and partiality to the enemies of the Arabs." The Acting Foreign Minister is reported to have stated in reply that there was no doubt that Mr. Amery had made an unfavorable impression in the hearts of the people of Arab countries and of Iraq in particular. He added that Mr. Amery had of course been named President of the Iraq Currency Board for a fixed period and that on the expiration of this period the question as to who should fill this post would be reconsidered.

In conclusion the Department is informed that General Nuri left Baghdad yesterday for a visit to Syria and the Lebanon where his family is spending the summer, and that he is expected to return within a few days. During his absence the Foreign Minister, Sayid Ali Jawdat al-Ayoubi, who returned to Baghdad from his special mission to the Court of King Ibn Saud at Riyadh yesterday, will be acting Prime Minister, and that General Taha al-Hashimi, the Minister of Defense, has been appointed acting Minister of Interior. King Faisal II, with his mother and court attendants, is leaving Baghdad for the Lebanon, where he is to spend the summer at Aley, by special convoy this afternoon. It is expected, however, that the Regent, Prince Abdul

Ilah

Ilah, will remain in Iraq during the entire summer.

Respectfully yours,

P. Knabenshue

M
JCS/jve
File no. 800/840.1

Enclosure:

Summary of a Debate in Parliament
in Iraq's Foreign Policy.

Copies to:

American Embassy, London
American Legation, Cairo
American Consulate General, Beirut
American Consulate General, Jerusalem

A true copy of
the signed ori-
ginal. *PL*

Enclosure to despatch no. 1336 of July 11, 1939,
from the American Legation at Baghdad, Iraq.

Source: The Iraq Times, July 7, 1939

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON IRAQ'S FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance were the principal speakers for the Government in a debate in the Majlis on Iraq's foreign relations, during the discussion of the Budget Estimates of the Foreign Ministry. When Iraq's relations with her ally Great Britain came up for discussion, some Deputies complained that Iraq was regarded by Britain as a factor of minor importance in her foreign policy and that the men in power in Iraq were not doing all they could to emphasize the strategic value of Iraq, which lies on the Imperial air route to the Far East and which is also an important producer of oil for Britain and her allies. One speaker said that in former years British politicians used to praise Iraq for the rapid progress which she had achieved, but now Iraq's wishes in certain cases were being disregarded. Difficulties were being placed in her way and also in the way of the realization of the national aspirations of the Arabs as, for example, in the cases of Syria and Palestine. The speaker urged Iraq's leaders to emphasize these facts whenever they could do so and to take every possible opportunity to stress the importance of Iraq, which, despite its small population as compared with other States, could always play its part in Near Eastern affairs. Other Deputies urged the Government to do everything in their power in support of the Arab cause in Palestine, contending that it was not merely enough to reject the British White Paper and to maintain a passive attitude.

The Prime Minister, H. E. Sayid Nuri as-Said, replying on the debate, said: "Iraq cannot dictate the foreign policy of other States or interfere on their affairs, as every country is quite free to adopt its own policy. Our foreign relations are influenced by two important factors, namely, the treaty with the Saadabad Powers, and our treaties with Saudi Arabia and the Yemen. We earnestly hope that the latter treaty will shortly be extended to include Egypt. Our policy regarding Syria and Palestine is well-known and requires no further elucidation. In the case of Palestine, we have always supported the demand for the establishment of a free Arab Government and the ending of the Zionist policy in that country. I may emphasize here that the importance of the part played by any State

in

in its foreign relations depends to a large extent on the nation's strength and internal stability. If the country concerned is weak internally, it cannot command the respect of foreign countries.

Speaking on the subject of credits, His Excellency said: "Great Britain has granted credits to her two allies, Turkey and Rumania, and, similarly, has expressed her readiness to give a credit to Iraq to enable us to increase the strength of our defences. I cannot at present divulge the conditions under which this credit is being granted, but I hope to do so as soon as the negotiations with Britain reach a satisfactory conclusion. I can assure the Majlis, however, that we are not being regarded as a 'factor of minor importance,' as some people appear to think. In fact, the conditions under which we are obtaining this credit are more favourable than those under which similar credits are being granted to other states.

The Finance Minister, H. E. Sayid Rustam Haidar, speaking in the course of the debate, warmly defended Sayid Nuri as-Said and his policy in general. He said that Sayid Nuri had given many years of his life for the cause of his country, and he would, without a doubt, continue to do his utmost for it in the future as he had done in the past. Sayid Rustam added that he was glad to have the opportunity to assure the Chamber that the Prime Minister had never at any time forgotten the cause of his country, for which he had worked untiringly for the last thirty years. He was not defending him as a member of his Cabinet, but as one who had been in constant touch with Sayid Nuri for many years, and as one who had the privilege of knowing the full extent of his services to Iraq.

TELEGRAM SENT

Secstate

Date: August 29, 1939, 1pm.

No.: 46

cc: Gpe Brown

Charged to: Legation

670 1-1142

Paraphrase

I have just been told by the Minister for Foreign Affairs that the position of Iraq as an ally of Great Britain is clear.

In the event of war, the German Minister says, he is ready to depart at a moment's notice and, believing that the United States Government would be unwilling to accept charge of German interests, will turn these over to the Iranian Legation.

Measures have been taken by the British Air Force to protect the pipeline with subsidized tribesmen as well as local levies and armoured car sections.

Knabenshue

JK/jve
Enc: GFM
Par: JVE
File no. 800 Conf.

TELEGRAM SENT

Secstate

Date: September 2, 1939

No.: 48

Gray and Brown

Charged to: Legation

680 1-1112

Paraphrase

In a declaration broadcast last night the Prime Minister first denounced any policy of recourse to force as opposed to negotiations for the peaceful settlement of international disputes and then said: (translation)

"Iraq's attitude in relation to world events is evident, clear, and unequivocal. Iraq is bound with Great Britain in a treaty of alliance which was concluded on June 30, 1930."

After analyzing the provisions of Article 4 of the Treaty,

"It is evident from the foregoing that Iraq in its capacity as ally of Great Britain is not liable for any duty except to facilitate for Great Britain communications within Iraq. It could not therefore devolve upon Iraq to participate in the war on any battlefield whatsoever. If however Iraq should be attacked, and this is improbable, it would then defend its frontiers."

Thus in practical effect Iraq will thus fulfill its treaty obligations but public anxiety was allayed by the fact that the decision was worded in such a way for it was feared, in spite of the wording of Article 4, that Iraq might be asked to send forces

Immediate exceptional protection is required for Americans

Knabenshue

2/VE

RE

RE

TELEGRAM SENT

Re:state

Re: Brown

Date: September 6, 1939, 4pm

No.: -50-

Charged to: Legation

600 11142

Paraphrase

It was decided yesterday by the Iraqi Council of Ministers to sever diplomatic relations with Germany and to send out of Iraq all German citizens. The German Minister, leaving today, is being compelled, he tells me, to travel, instead of by Iran and Russia as instructed by his Government, via Syria and by sea to Italy.

I used my good offices with the French Minister, at the request of the German Minister, to secure an assurance of respect for the safe conduct endorsed by him on the German Minister's passport for his passage through Syria and the Lebanon.

I know as a strictly confidential fact that the reason for refusal to leave Iraq by Iran was due to the British fear that the German Minister, Grobba, would remain in Iran together with his staff and, since he is believed to be the Chief of German propaganda in the Near East, use it as a base of intrigue.

Re:CHM
Re:JVE
600 Conf.

Baghdad, Iraq, September 7, 1939

No. 1375

Subject: Iraq's Position in the Present Crisis.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to my telegram no. 48 of September 2, 1939, reporting briefly the outstanding features of the radio address of General Nuri as-Said, Iraqi Prime Minister, on the evening of Friday, September 1, 1939, in which he defined the attitude of Iraq in respect to the world crisis as it had developed up to that date. I enclose a translation of the Prime Minister's address as it appeared in the local press.

For some days previous to the Prime Minister's announcement speculation was rife as to what attitude the Iraqi Government would take in connection with the world crisis. It was evident that public opinion was influenced somewhat by the pro-German sentiments of certain elements of the population including certain government officials and certain senior army officers who had been educated

educated in Germany or under German influence in Turkey. Also it was generally believed that more recent German propaganda had influenced certain elements of the population. It was rumoured that there were certain dissensions among Cabinet Ministers with respect to the official position to be taken by Iraq in the event of war. It is known that the Cabinet was meeting daily for periods of several hours. I sounded the Counselor of the British Embassy on the subject and I gained the general impression from what he told me as well as from his manner and tone that while the British Embassy undoubtedly had been a little concerned they were finally satisfied that the Iraq Government would fulfill its treaty obligations and that the Cabinet deliberations had finally narrowed down to the drafting of a formula to this end. The Prime Minister's radio address made on the evening of the day of the German advance into Poland undoubtedly represents the final decision of the Iraqi Council of Ministers.

There is no doubt that there was much speculation among the general public as to the possibilities of general mobilization in Iraq and the sending of troops for operations abroad - particularly Turkey and Egypt. In order to allay public anxiety in this respect and also because of the terms of Article 4 of the Anglo-Iraq Treaty of Alliance which provided for Iraqi assistance to the British only on Iraq territory the Prime Minister made it clear in his address that Iraqi troops would not operate outside the country unless it be for the actual defense of its frontiers.

The British Government having declared war against
Germany

Germany on September 3, the Iraq Government as its first concrete act as an ally severed diplomatic relations with Germany on September 5. It is not yet known whether Iraq will declare war against Germany but it is known that in other respects it is fulfilling its treaty obligations in respect to assistance rendered to the British in accordance with Article 4 of the Treaty, and to this end the Government is daily formulating and issuing decrees.

On the day following the decision of the Iraqi Council of Ministers to sever diplomatic relations with Germany the German Minister left Baghdad with his staff under military escort for Germany via Syria and the Lebanon and thence by steamer to Italy. In this connection I would draw attention to my telegram no. 50 of September 6, 1939, and particularly to the confidential paragraph thereof.

Respectfully yours,

P. Knabenshue

Enclosure:

Copy of Prime Minister's Speech.

File no. 800
PK/jve

Enclosure to despatch no. 1375 of September 7, 1939, from
American Legation at Baghdad, Iraq.

Source: Az-Zaman of September 2, 1939.

Iraq's Attitude Towards the War
Announcement by His Excellency Sayid Nuri As-Said
the Prime Minister, on the Iraqi Radio Last Evening

Gentlemen:

It is with deep regret that the world crisis has taken such a grave turn that it is now threatening the outbreak of the fire of a world war the sparks of which might even fall on Iraq.

We in our capacity as Iraqis, belonging to a small, new nation, can not but express our great regret at this grave development and our deep indignation at any policy that takes recourse to force. We find that every policy of this kind is a real danger to the future of all small nations such as ours.

The policy which suits us and which we confirm and support with all our might, is the policy of right and justice which opens the field to all nations for the settlement of their problems through the means of negotiations based on the spirit of understanding and fair play for the welfare of the entire world.

The inclination to adopt one of these two policies has, as we can observe, divided the states of the world into two distant groups. In spite of the present crisis the incidents of the annihilation of certain independent countries indicate the deviation of certain states from the peaceful policy which we uphold. We trust from the bottom of our hearts that at the last moment reason shall overcome sentiment and thus the world will be saved from the evil of an internecine war which will equally prejudice both the victor and the vanquished.

If war breaks out, then it would be an inevitable destiny which Iraq could not check, but it would devolve upon Iraq to hasten to carry out its task. Therefore, I consider that I should draw the attention of the public to certain matters which will enlighten our path in these critical circumstances.

Iraq's attitude in relation to world events, is evident and clear and is not surrounded by any ambiguity. Iraq is bound with Great Britain in a Treaty of Alliance which was concluded on June 30, 1930. Article 4 thereof comprises three paragraphs which can be divided as follows:

a - Should either of the High Contracting Parties become engaged in war, which they can not settle by peaceful means, the other Party will immediately come to his aid in the capacity of an ally.

b - In the event of an imminent menace of war the Parties will immediately concert together the necessary measures of defense.

c - The aid of His Majesty the King of Iraq in the event of war or the imminent menace of war will consist in furnishing to His Britannic Majesty on Iraq territory all facilities and assistance in his power, including the use of railways, rivers, ports, aerodromes and means of communication.

It is evident from the foregoing that Iraq in its capacity as an ally of Great Britain is not liable for any duty except to facilitate for Great Britain communications within Iraq. It would not therefore devolve upon Iraq to participate in the war in any battlefield whatsoever. If, however, Iraq should be attacked - and this is improbable - it would then defend its frontiers.

With regard to the economic crisis which will probably develop in war time owing to a depression of the markets, the situation is not expected to last long and it is hoped that it will be compensated by the ultimate improvement in prices and increase in the demand for our products.

Gentlemen:

No person in the world can predict the developments, results, and duration of the war especially in relation to the numerous modern inventions, the perfection of the equipment, and the efficiency and the large size of aerial armaments. All we can say is that victory is in the hands of Allah.

In view of the critical world situation and the developments which may follow after the development of fighting between the belligerents, it is necessary for Iraq to cling to its well-known, fine, noble characteristics.

While it is anticipated that various foreign propagandists will become active in the interest of foreigners, I warn the public against such propaganda. Side by side with certain loyal, sentimental persons anxious to attain their national aspirations without taking into consideration circumstances, time, and place, there exists a group of opportunists who care for nothing but the realization of their ambitions. There is another group of hirelings who have sold their conscience. This group conducts an alluring propaganda, by which it exploits the enthusiasm of the people, the innocence of the ignorant, the emotion of the sentimental, and the greed of the ambitious, forgetting the interest of its nation.

The nation has built the existence of Iraq on sacrifices and noble endeavors and made it firm through the wisdom, perseverance, and far-sightedness of its leaders. This existence is of such strength and firmness, that it is desired by the greater part of the Arab states which endeavor to obtain a similar existence. The Iraqi nation attained this existence after it had fought for it many years. If it is our right to be proud of it, it is our duty to preserve it and we should guide ourselves by a wise

policy toward our distant national aspirations which we hope to realize in time, by the will of Allah.

I hereby announce that the Government's policy is centralized in placing the safety of Iraq before everything else. This safety is not for the welfare of Iraq alone but for the whole Arab world. Therefore, we shall have to be very careful not to give an opportunity to any person to impair in any manner the safety of Iraq.

I invite our brothers, all of the Iraqis, to face events - as they have been accustomed to do in time of difficulties - and urge them to meet them with the courage, sacrifice, coolness and far-sightedness for which they are distinguished. We pray Allah to lead us to goodness and wisdom.

Fr: JNO/AJL/Jgb.

Baghdad, Iraq, September 23, 1939

No. 1390

Subject: Political Situation in Iraq.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to my telegram no. 58 of September 19, 1939, 10 a. m., the first paragraph of which stated that the Prime Minister was endeavouring to form a coalition government including certain leading personalities of the opposition but that he was meeting with difficulties. It has been evident for some time that General Nuri's Cabinet was not a strong one and that sooner or later he would have either to strengthen it or retire in favor of the opposition. This became even more apparent with the advent of the European crisis. Nuri himself realized the situation

and

and with the help of the British Embassy has endeavoured to persuade certain leaders of the opposition to join him in a more representative national coalition Cabinet. The principal personalities of the opposition are Jamil Medfai, Tewfiq Suwaidi, and Naji Suwaidi, all of whom are ex-Prime Ministers.

Nuri, being loath to part with any of his present Ministers, desired to effect a coalition Cabinet by the addition of new members. His Cabinet consisted of seven Ministers including himself as Prime Minister and Acting Minister of Interior. The Constitution provides that the number of State Ministers should not exceed nine. The question was raised as to whether this number would include the Prime Minister who under the Constitution has no specified Ministerial duty. The matter was referred to the High Tribunal and its final decision was that the Prime Minister cannot be considered as a Minister within the meaning of the duty of a Minister as set forth in Article 67 of the Constitution. The Tribunal also ruled that Article 64 of the Constitution clearly forbids the appointment of Ministers without portfolio. It was therefore made possible for Nuri to add three new Cabinet Ministers, himself holding no portfolio.

In spite of all influences and pressure Medfai and the Suwaidis refused to join Nuri's Cabinet and in the end he was obliged to call upon others, with the result that on September 21 a Royal Decree was issued appointing the following new Ministers:

Minister of Interior: Omar Nadhmi, previously Minister of Works and Communications, and Acting Minister of Economics in this same Cabinet.

Minister

Minister of Works and Communications: Jalal Baban, formerly Minister of Economics and Communications in the Medfai Cabinet of 1937.

Minister of Economics: Sadiq al-Bassam, formerly Minister of Education in the last Cabinet of Yasin al-Hashimi (1935).

Minister of Social Affairs: Dr. Sami Shawkat, who has up to the present been Director-General of Education.

It will be seen that the last-named Ministry, which has been newly created, fills out the number of Ministries to nine, so that the Cabinet as rearranged and increased is now as follows:

Prime Minister: Nuri as-Said

Minister of Interior: Omar Nadhmi

Minister for Foreign Affairs: Ali Jawdat al-Ayoubi

Minister for Defense: Taha al-Hashimi

Minister of Finance: Rustam Haider

Minister of Justice: Mahmud Subhi al-Daftari

Minister of Education: Saleh Jabur

Minister of Works and Communications: Jalal Baban

Minister of Economics: Sadiq al-Bassam

Minister of Social Affairs: Dr. Sami Shawkat

It is the general consensus of opinion that while Nuri has increased the size of the Cabinet he has not materially strengthened it. However, it is the opinion of those qualified to know that the opposition, headed by Medfai, will not resort to violent or other illegal or improper means to interfere with or bring about the fall of Nuri's Cabinet. Nevertheless, it is confidently believed that this present Cabinet will because of its own weakness be forced to resign in a normal way before long.

Until

Until within the last few days rumour had it that the Government was contemplating general mobilization and that the decree calling it had already been drafted, but that the unpopularity of such a move and the opposition to it headed by General Taha al-Hashimi, the Minister for Defense, would prove to be so formidable as to bring about a coup d'état should the Government insist upon the mobilization. It was then rumoured that there was dissension in other respects between the Prime Minister and General Taha. However, public anxiety in the above respect has been allayed by a broadcast speech on the night of September 21 by General Taha from which it was evident that he fully supports the Prime Minister in his policies as announced in his (Nuri's) broadcast speech of September 1, reported in my despatch no. 1375 of September 7, 1939. It has also become known that general mobilization is not contemplated but that only a gradual calling to the colours will be effected of the few reservists who have already had any military training. Consequently, at the present moment the situation is tranquil.

Respectfully yours,

P. Knabenshue

File no. 800
PK/jve





Baghdad, Iraq, October 9, 1939

No. 1396

Subject: Iraqi Fears of Russia and Turkey.

Confidential

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that since the outbreak of the hostilities in Europe the chief fear of Iraqis generally and the army in particular has been the possibility of an invasion of Iraq by Russia or by Turkey. This fear became accentuated upon the announcement of the Russo-German agreement reported in the local press on September 30, 1939. For some days previous to the conclusion of this agreement the Turkish Foreign Minister was in Moscow negotiating with the Russian Government. It was feared locally that Russia would impose terms upon Turkey which might cause that country to take a course of action liable to threaten Iraq. It

was

was at this juncture that General Nuri, the Prime Minister, made his second broadcast speech to the nation on September 26 (the first was on September 1 and was reported in my despatch no. 1375 of September 7, 1939) the purpose of which might be variously interpreted. A copy of a translation of the speech is enclosed herewith.

The Prime Minister seems to be especially concerned about the moves of Russian diplomacy since the outbreak of war, and to fear that these moves may eventually involve Turkey (Iraq's ally of the Sa'adabad Pact) in war; that they may also involve Great Britain in another direction, and thereby conceivably call for a fuller application of the alliance between England and Iraq.

In view of the possible imminence of such a state of affairs, the Prime Minister seeks to rally Iraqis to the cause of the British alliance. He is at great pains to make this course of action seem the only one consistent with Arab honour, tradition, and advantage, and he denounces almost openly the pro-German elements that are in fact working against it. So one can only gather that he fears the strength of these anti-British and pro-German elements, and feels that the cause of the alliance needs bolstering.

Because of the fact that it is generally believed that at the conclusion of the war it is entirely possible Turkey, as a quid pro quo for its support of the Allies, might be granted Arab territory including at least Aleppo, Mosul, and Kirkuk, I interpret Nuri's speech as an effort to gain popular support for the Iraqi Government's policy to fulfill its obligations under the Anglo-Iraq

Treaty

treaty inasmuch as he believes it affords the best and possibly the only real assurance Iraq might have of maintaining an unimpaired position after the conclusion of the present conflict.

Respectfully yours,

P. Knabenshue

Enclosure:

Copy of translation
of speech.

PK/jve
800

AMERICAN LEGATION
COPY FOR AMERICAN LEGATION, BAGHDAD. OCTOBER 29, 1939

Bulkeley, Alexandria, October 29, 1939.

Action
File

Re 1095.

Subject: News reaches Egypt of Palestine Grand Mufti's
Move to Iraq.

76

800

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that the local English and French
press of October 18 and 19 mentions the report that the Grand Mufti
of Palestine left the Lebanon and arrived in Baghdad, without say-
ing however that he fled.

Al-Ahram of October 17, on a Beirut date-line of October 16
from its special correspondent in Beirut, says (in translation
from Arabic):

"I

"I have learned today that the Sayyed Amin al-Husseini departed from the village of Zook in the Lebanon, where he had been staying with his family. I have not been able to find out anything concerning the direction he took or the route he followed, which has been surrounded with great secrecy. All I know is that he did cross the Lebanese frontier."

This also avoids mentioning the Grand Mufti's change of location as a flight. The same paper reports from its special correspondent at Baghdad that the Grand Mufti arrived there, coming from the Lebanon, and was received with a great welcome.

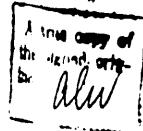
The discreetness of the Egyptian press, Arabic and European, in avoiding mention of the Mufti's reported move to Baghdad as an escape or flight may well be due to the censorship established in Egypt under the present state of siege. The British Ambassador here has told me that the Mufti actually fled, that the French had been careless in the matter by allowing him to slip through their hands, and that he was not at all pleased at the development.

Respectfully yours,

Bert Fish

In triplicate
File no. 600
ALW

Copy to American Legation, Baghdad, via Department.
" Consulate General, Jerusalem, via Department.
" " Beirut, " "



TELEGRAM SENT

Secstate

Date: October 22, 1939

Brown

No.: 64

Charged to: Legation

620 1-112

Paraphrase

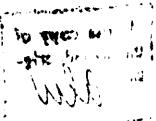
Baghdad received the signing of the English French
Turkish pacts with a distinct feeling of relief. A real
anxiety lest Turkey succumb to Russian demands with
consequences potentially dangerous to Iraq was allayed.

Knabenshue

PK/jve
Enc:wjp
Per: jve
824.2

B

P.R.



TELEGRAM SENT

2 Secstate

Date: October 27, 1939, 11am

No.: 67

2 Brown

Charged to: Legion

ccs 1-1142

Paraphrase

An early meeting of representatives of the Saadabad
group has been reported by recent Italian and French broad-
casts. The Iranian and Turkish Ministers informed me in
reply to my inquiries that Iraq had taken no initiative in
the matter and had not been approached. However the Turkish
Minister informed me last night that the Iraqi Minister for
Foreign Affairs, suggesting the desirability of such a meeting,
on that day asked him to suggest it to his Government. 7

K

H/wjp
Hnwjp
Enc: Jve
ED C

Baghdad, Iraq, November 1, 1939

No. 1425

Subject: Proposed Meeting of the Saadabad Powers.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that the Italian broadcasts have recently been announcing the intention of the members of the Saadabad Pact to meet shortly to discuss the international situation and its relation to members of the pact.

On Saturday morning, October 21, the Iranian Minister paid me a visit and during the course of our conversation I referred to the Italian broadcasts and asked him whether he had heard anything officially or otherwise regarding the rumoured meeting of the signatories thereto. He said that he had no information about it and that he did not see why in the circumstances they should meet, inasmuch as their mutual relations were not affected by the international situation. In this, of course, he was wrong, for, in accordance with Article III of the

Saadabad Pact

Saadabad Pact "The High Contracting Parties agree to consult each other in all matters relating to conflicts of international character having regard to their common interests."

It is obvious that the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of Alliance, the English-French-Turkish Agreement, and the rumours of at least Russian economic demands on Iran, might conceivably lead to developments which would affect the common interests of the members of the Saadabad Pact.

On the same afternoon, when I returned the visit of the Turkish Minister, he told me that he had no official information regarding the rumoured meeting, but he thought it entirely possible that the matter was being discussed at Ankara, and he personally believed it would be a good thing if such a meeting should take place.

On October 23 the Minister for Foreign Affairs said that the Iraqi Government had not been approached in the matter, but he said that he would not be surprised if such a meeting were to be arranged sometime in the near future.

On the evening of October 26 the Turkish Minister informed me that the Minister for Foreign Affairs had on that day suggested to him the desirability of a meeting of representatives of the members of the Saadabad Pact in order to discuss the present international situation, and asked that he refer the matter to his Government for consideration.

I communicated the substance of this despatch to the Department in my telegram no. 67 of October 27, 11am.

Respectfully yours,

P. Knabenshue

600
R/176

Paraphrase

TELEGRAM SENT

Embassy, Tehran

Date: December 18, 1 p.m., 1939.

No.: --

Mr. Brown

Charged to: Office

680 1-1142

SD

There are rumors in Baghdad that demonstrations against Iraq are taking place near Iraqi Legation in Teheran. Would appreciate any information you have on this subject.

Knubenshue

Per: WJP

Paraphrase.

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

to: American Legation
Tehran

Date: December 18, 10 A.M. 1-1143

No.: -----

via: BROWN

Received: December 18, 6 P.M.

Confidential

Refer to your telegram of December 15, 1 P.M. There is no foundation whatsoever for these reports. It is my understanding that this rumor was started by Hatchek a German agent who recently arrived and who I am told was in Mosul at the time of the murder of the British Consul. *(initials)*

Engert.

008

Decode: WJP
Para. GHM
GHM

RECORDED
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASH. D. C.

FEB 9 1940

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

December 28, 1939

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

My dear Mr. Minister:

Our attention has been drawn to a United Press despatch bearing a Rome dateline of December 21, 1939 stating that according to the Italian press, the Afghan Government has ordered general mobilization of all its armed forces and adopted other measures to provide strict military vigilance on the Afghan-Soviet Russianfrontier.

Il Messaggero contained the additional statement, according to the despatch, that the Afghan Government has decided, also, to initiate conversations with Iraq, Iran and Turkey for the purpose of keeping close contact on matters relating to the Soviets.

Possibly the Italian Government has caused this article to be published for purposes best known to itself, and the item may or may not bear a close relation to the facts. Be that as it may, we should of course be greatly interested to learn of whatever you may hear regarding such conversations, and to receive your interpretation of them. If consultations among the governments si mulatory

to

The Honorable
Paul Knabenshue.
American Minister Resident
and Consul General,
Dahabid.

- 2 -

to the Saadabad Pact. Such occur or are occurring, conceivably they might indicate that the countries concerned are taking some benefit from the military ineptitude recently displayed by Soviet Russia in Finland.

Sincerely yours,

Paul X. Keating